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ABSTRACT

This document presents a set of principles for effective professional development and a series of practical suggestions to help schools and school districts implement these principles. The document also profiles several Indiana schools and programs that exemplify the type of school-based approach to professional development that is so promising. Information comes from a review of research on professional development; discussions with experts nationwide; focus groups with Indiana teachers, principals, and professionals representing other organizations; and a review process that involved teachers, principals, superintendents, and representatives of educational service centers, professional organizations, and the Indiana Department of Education. Chapter 1 presents "Principles of Effective Professional Development." Chapter 2 discusses "A Framework for Effective Professional Development" (trust, time, and recognition). Chapter 3 offers "An Action Plan for Effective Professional Development." The action plan involves identifying the school's improvement needs and priorities; establishing a reservoir of resources; establishing school improvement teams; providing initial support for school improvement teams; operating school improvement teams; maintaining communication and meaningful accountability; and establishing new priorities. Chapter 4 focuses on "Rethinking the Role of Central School District Actors: School Boards, Administrators, and Unions" (policy, funding, and assistance). (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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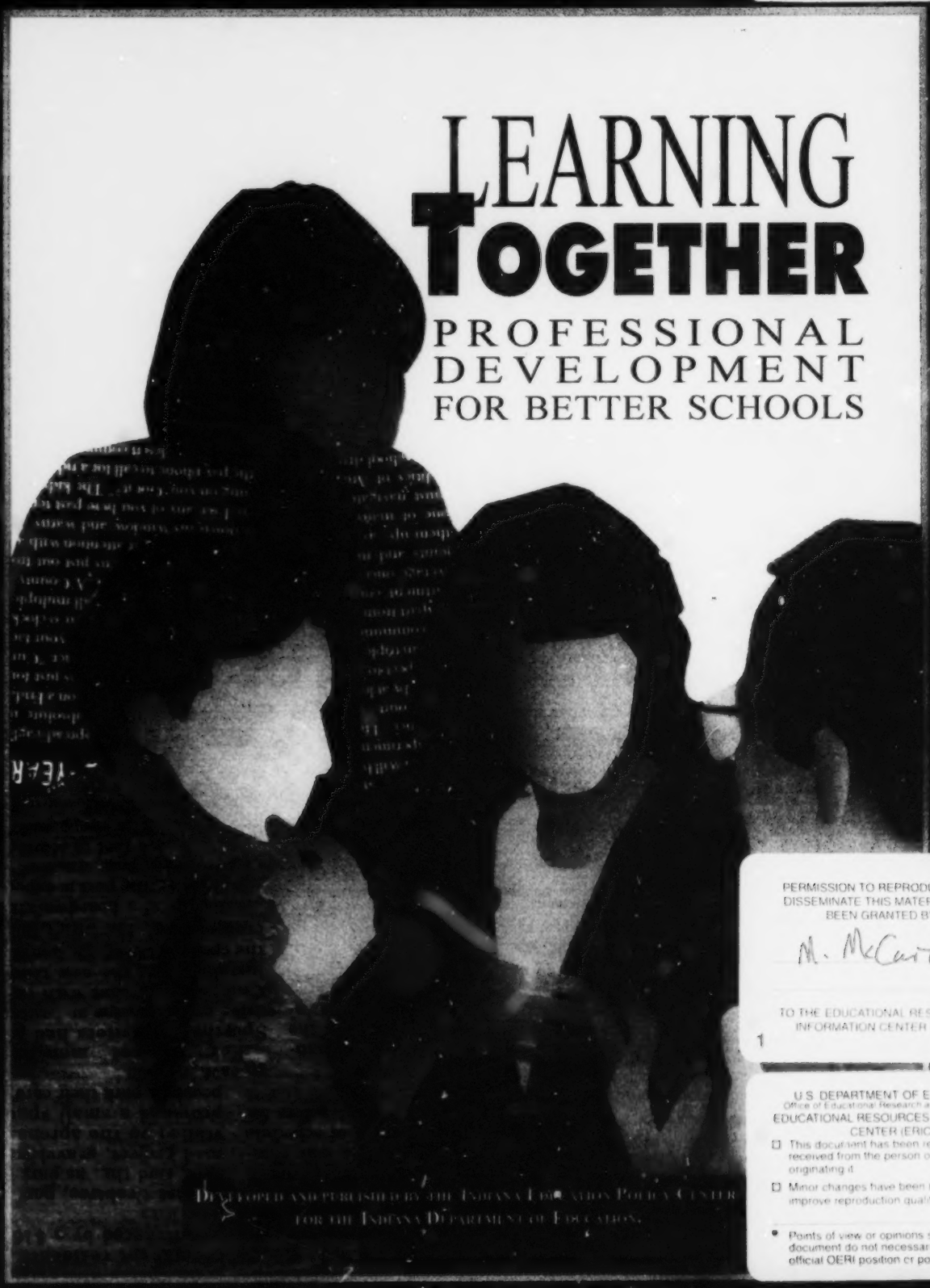
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR BETTER SCHOOLS



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LEARNING TOGETHER

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

by Barry Bull and Mark Buechler

Prepared for the Indiana Department of Education
by the Indiana Education Policy Center

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September 1996

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Planning Group: *Steve Heck,* Director, Indiana Principal Leadership Academy (IPLA); *Norma Kacen,* Government Relations National Coordinator, Indiana State Teachers Association; *Gail Pluta,* Staff Representative, Indiana Federation of Teachers; *Sally Sloan,* Staff Representative, Indiana Federation of Teachers; *Phyllis Usher,* Assistant Superintendent, IDOE; *Ed Wall,* Executive Director, Indiana Association of School Principals; and *James Welling,* Executive Director of Elementary Education, Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation.

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LEARNING TOGETHER

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

• A SUMMARY •

Traditionally, professional development for teachers has consisted of one-shot training workshops delivered by outside consultants with no follow-up. This document sets forth five principles for a much broader approach to professional development, one that encompasses research, reflection, discussion, peer coaching, collaborative planning and problem solving, and involvement in decision making, along with more traditional skills training.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following five principles encourage teachers and administrators at each school site to plan and implement professional development activities based on a coherent vision for overall school improvement:

- Effective professional development is school based.
- Effective professional development uses coaching and other follow-up procedures.
- Effective professional development is collaborative.
- Effective professional development is embedded in the daily lives of teachers, providing for continuous growth.
- Effective professional development focuses on student learning and is evaluated at least in part on that basis.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Without the proper setting and support, even the best professional development initiatives undertaken by the most motivated school professionals are in danger of failing. The three most important conditions for initiating and sustaining professional development are:

- Capable, active leadership
- Policy and resource support
- Adequate time built into the school schedule

Establishing a Framework of Trust, Time, and Recognition

Implementing the principles of effective professional development may mean making profound changes in the way schools operate and in the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. One framework for enabling schools to make these changes involves trust, time, and recognition:

- To foster trust, professional development should be founded on a participatory process of identifying concrete needs for school improvement at each school site.
- To make time available, each school should place all of its resources for professional development into a reservoir to be used exclusively to support work on the school's priorities for improvement.
- To provide recognition, each school should appoint teachers and other relevant personnel to teams formally charged with achieving its school improvement priorities.

An Action Plan

One way to build trust, provide time, and ensure recognition for effective professional development involves the following seven steps:

Step 1 Identify the school's improvement needs and priorities through a process that includes teachers, parents, and administrators and that is formally endorsed by the school board, central office, and union.

Step 2 Establish a reservoir of resources by consolidating existing professional development funds.

Step 3 Create school improvement teams, focusing on one or two top priorities that each school has the resources to support.

Step 4 Provide initial support for the teams by exposing them to new concepts of professional development, providing access to resources, and making adequate time available.

Step 5 Operate the school improvement teams, using data, research, and outside help, and enabling other teachers in the school to benefit from their work.

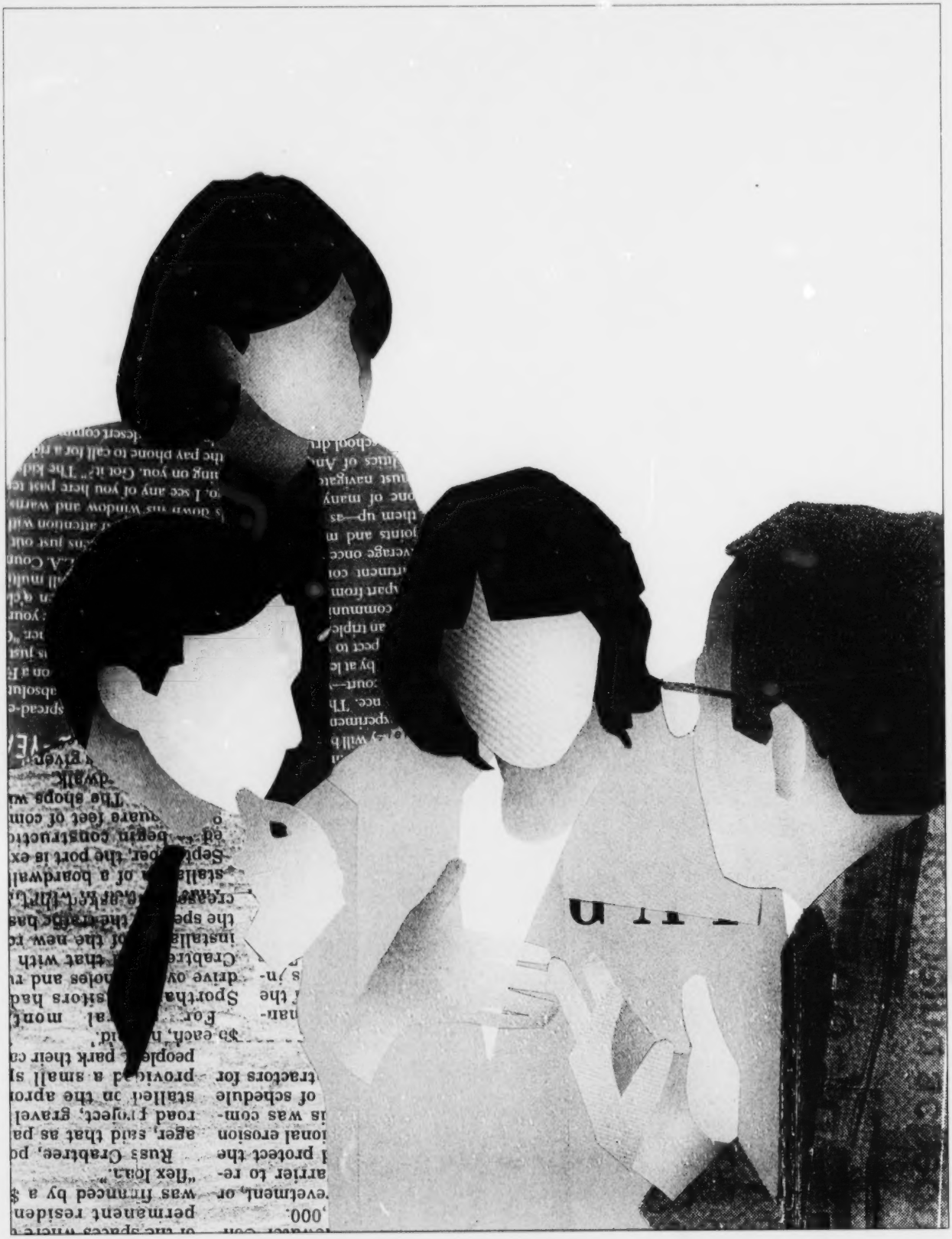
Step 6 Maintain communication and meaningful accountability by reporting to parents, colleagues at the school, and school district actors.

Step 7 Establish new priorities by beginning new school improvement projects as old projects wind down and new priorities emerge.

Through this or a related process, schools can build their own capacity to improve student learning. They can adapt continuously to changing social circumstances and public expectations. And they can become accountable to the public in truly meaningful ways. In short, they can become centers of continuous learning for students and teachers alike.

LEARNING TOGETHER

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR BETTER SCHOOLS



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• Chapter 1 •

Principles of Effective Professional Development

Which of the following statements is correct?

- Professional development is usually a waste of time.
- Professional development is central to the success of education reform in America.

More and more educators these days believe ***both*** statements. On the one hand, they agree that professional development as it has been practiced for decades—that is, occasional workshops conducted by outside consultants with little or no follow-up—is generally ineffective. "Every teacher in America's public schools has taken inservice courses, workshops, and training programs," wrote American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker in 1990. "But as universal as the practice has been, so is the disappointment among teachers and management as to the usefulness of most staff development experiences."

On the other hand, many teachers also realize that genuine education reform brings a whole new set of demands into play. Teachers may be:

- assuming leadership roles in schools with site-based management;
- devising and implementing new curricula and instructional strategies;
- being held accountable for more rigorous academic standards for all students;
- using portfolios and performance-based assessments;
- working with students from different cultures, backgrounds, and ability levels, including students with disabilities; and
- incorporating multimedia, listservs, the World Wide Web, and other technologies into their classrooms.

Now, teachers aren't magicians. They can't snap their fingers and miraculously begin managing multi-age classrooms or designing Web pages. Like doctors, lawyers, business executives, scientists, professors . . . in short, like people in every profession where knowledge advances and new challenges emerge, teachers need opportunities to ***learn*** new approaches. And learning obviously means professional development.

So the dilemma is clear. Many teachers want to participate in rigorous professional development activities so they can meet head-on the demands of educating America's youth for the 21st century. But too often, current professional development programs provide neither the kind of learning opportunities that benefit teachers nor the time teachers need to learn successfully. So a new approach to professional development is called for. What might it look like, and how might time be made available for teachers to participate when their days are already filled with other responsibilities?

Purpose and Content Of This Document

At the request of the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), the Indiana Education Policy Center has developed a set of principles for effective professional development and a series of practical suggestions to help schools and school districts implement those principles. This document also provides profiles of several Indiana schools and programs that exemplify, in part or whole, the type of school-based approach to professional development that is so promising. Preparation for this task included (a) a review of the research on professional development, (b) discussions with experts around the country, (c) focus groups with Indiana teachers, principals, and representatives of professional organizations, and (d) a review process that involved teachers, principals, superintendents, and representatives of educational service centers, professional organizations, and the IDOE.

The principles of effective professional development are set forth in this chapter, along with some conditions necessary for the principles to be implemented and sustained. Chapter 2 provides a framework for establishing effective professional development in schools. Chapter 3 describes an action plan for schools. Finally, Chapter 4 addresses the role of school district authorities—school boards, central office administrators, and unions—as responsibility for professional development shifts to the school. Complete citations for books and articles mentioned in the text are given in the reference list at the end of the document.

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OVERVIEW
Professional Development For Better Schools

Over the past few years, a fairly firm consensus has emerged among researchers, consultants, and teachers regarding the principles that drive effective professional development initiatives. One thing almost everyone agrees on is that one-shot workshops for teachers are generally ineffective. Instead of occasional, fragmented workshops, professional development activities need to include sustained training for teachers, with plenty of opportunities for observation, practice, feedback, coaching, and reflection.

Skills training for individual teachers, no matter how well designed, may not be enough to further the innovations that need to take place in schools.

However, skills training for individual teachers, no matter how well designed, may not be enough to further the innovations that need to take place in schools. What is needed goes beyond skills training to *organizational development,* which involves not just changes in individual teachers' beliefs and abilities but also "improvements in the capacity of the organization to solve problems and renew itself," as Dennis Sparks, executive director of the National Staff Development Council, put it in a 1994 article. This means, among other things:

- respecting the professional judgment of teachers;
- encouraging teachers to work together to analyze and solve problems at the school level, not just at the classroom, team, or department level;
- modifying school policies and governance structures to ensure teacher participation in decisions on professional growth and the mission of the school;
- cultivating a school culture (the norms, values, and beliefs that underlie formal operations and help establish a school's identity) that promotes collaboration, risk-taking, and continuous learning; and
- actively seeking evidence on the effects of professional development efforts—particularly the effects on student achievement—and making appropriate adjustments in response to the evidence.

Ultimately, organizational development means transforming schools into "centers of inquiry," in Robert Schaefer's trenchant phrase, that is, centers of continuous learning for students, teachers, and administrators alike.

Principles of Effective Professional Development

The five principles of effective professional development discussed in this chapter stem directly from the invitation to align individual improvement goals with overall school improvement efforts. The principles are as follows:—

1. Effective professional development is school based.
2. Effective professional development uses coaching and other follow-up procedures.
3. Effective professional development is collaborative.
4. Effective professional development is embedded in the daily lives of teachers, providing for continuous growth.
5. Effective professional development focuses on student learning and is evaluated at least in part on that basis.

Principle #1

Effective professional development is school based.

At present, professional development is by and large a district-level responsibility. Districts administer inservice programs and provide funding for individual teachers to attend workshops and conferences. Unfortunately, these types of activities lend themselves to the smorgasbord effect: *one of these, one of those, maybe some of that over there,* with little thought given to how the dishes complement each other or what will be served the following day.

The idea is to bring teachers and administrators at each school together to plan and implement a coherent set of professional development activities based on a vision for overall school improvement.

It may be advisable, therefore, to shift from district-level professional development initiatives to site-specific, school-based ones. District initiatives often do not address the unique challenges, the unique possibilities, and the unique cultures of individual schools. Only teachers, principals, and other professionals at each school are truly capable of doing that.

The idea is to bring teachers and administrators at each school together to plan and implement a coherent set of professional development activities based on a vision for overall school im-

	School-based professional development
✓	Shifts primary responsibility for professional development to the school site.
✓	Addresses the specific needs, problems, and possibilities of individual schools.
✓	Makes professional development part of an overall school improvement plan.
✓	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of professional development.
✓	Adds coherence to what too often has been a grab bag of professional development opportunities.
✓	Adds continuity to what too often has been an on-again, off-again process.
✓	Concentrates limited resources where they can be of most benefit.

provement. (The process of formulating such a vision is itself a form of professional development.) Professional development initiatives for individual teachers, groups of teachers, and the faculty as a whole are carefully integrated in support of the overall vision.

One major advantage of this approach is that it gets teachers involved in the design of their own professional development activities. Such involvement gives teachers the opportunity to think about and discuss their own strengths and weaknesses, the needs of the students, and the direction of the school as a whole. It gives them ownership of whatever activities they eventually choose to pursue. And it helps foster the practice of collaboration in the quest for professional growth and school improvement.

This kind of school-based planning can keep schools from taking on too many initiatives at any given time or flitting from initiative to initiative over time, both of which can lead to fragmentation and superficiality. And instead of scattering professional development resources so widely that they end up having little lasting impact on anyone, a school-based approach makes it possible to concentrate resources where they might do considerable good.

Finally, school-based professional development helps ensure continuity in formulating and implementing professional development activities. Instead of asking each other, "What are *they* going to lay on us this year," teachers will be asking, "What can *we* learn over the next two or three years to help this school improve?"

Q & A

Q: *Some individual workshops I've attended have helped me grow professionally. Does school-based professional development mean that I'll have fewer such opportunities?*

Not necessarily. Many teachers will go to *more* workshops, if that's what they and their colleagues decide is best for the school. As long as individual growth opportunities are part of a more far-reaching plan for school improvement, they are a welcome—indeed an essential—part of school-based professional development. In fact, teachers will probably be joined by colleagues and engage in follow-up activities, so that the techniques they are exposed to at workshops and conferences can be digested, discussed, practiced, revised, mastered, and shared, rather than just filed away for future use, as is so often the case today.

AS LONG AS INDIVIDUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ARE PART OF A MORE FAR-REACHING PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, THEY ARE A WELCOME—INDEED AN ESSENTIAL—PART OF SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

To be sure, resources are finite and priorities must be set, so there's always the chance that certain activities that are meaningful personally to some teachers may have to be sacrificed. Such are the risks of shared decision making, of considering the progress of the entire school along with the progress of individual teachers. But these are not decisions that will be imposed upon teachers from above; teachers will help make these decisions based on their own vision for school improvement.

Q: *Some of my best professional development experiences have been with colleagues from other schools. Does school-based professional development mean that we'll no longer have the opportunity to share across schools and school districts?*

Certainly not. School-based professional development does not rule out individual growth or broader connections among teachers and schools. Rather, all sorts of collaboration— from small groups within schools to national networks—are encouraged, depending upon the needs of particular schools. If teachers at a school decide that subject matter expertise is the avenue to school improvement, then active participation of teachers in subject matter networks and professional associations would probably be one of the highest priorities at that school. Similarly, if several schools have the same concerns and the same school improvement focus, they can collaborate in any number of ways, from *(Continued on page 9.)*

This gave teachers the opportunity to have some sort of structured time during the day to get together.

—Kristi Knapp
Principal, Charles Elementary School

• **Principles in Practice** •

CHARLES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Weekly Time for Professional Development

Corporation: Richmond Community School Corporation
Principal: Kristi Knapp
Address: 2400 Reeveston Road, Richmond, IN 47374
Phone: 317-973-3441

By law, elementary schools in Indiana must conduct at least 180 student instructional days per school year. Each day must consist of at least 5 hours of instructional time, for a minimum of 900 instructional hours per year. Schools may not deviate from this schedule without a waiver from the state, even if they compensate by providing more than 900 total hours of instruction over the course of the school year.

One school that has requested and received such a waiver is Charles Elementary School in Richmond. Five years ago, Charles undertook a major restructuring project. To help the teachers plan and adjust and innovate, the school adopted a nontraditional calendar: extended instructional days on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and a half-day on Wednesday. "This gave teachers the opportunity to have some sort of structured time during the day to get together," said principal Kristi Knapp. They have used this time for a variety of collaborative professional development activities, including planning, curriculum writing, theme building, sessions with outside experts, and study and discussion of educational approaches and pressing school problems.

"We bring people in that we wouldn't normally be able to without having to provide substitutes," said Knapp. "Also, we changed over to an inclusion model for special education, and it was so much easier because our teachers were available to do the kind of planning they needed to do to make those adjustments."

There's also a more general reward. "It's more contact time with one another," said Knapp, something that's in short supply at most schools.

While teachers work together, students have the option of staying at school or going home. "We have activities available for students," said Knapp. The local museum works with the school to provide programs, as do arts groups and other community organizations.

Somewhat surprisingly—given all the talk these days about how busy parents are—many parents want their kids at home. "Some parents have adjusted their own work week so that they get to spend time with their children," Knapp said. "Some have told us that because they have kids in middle schools and high schools that don't follow this schedule, that's their special time with their elementary children. And some grandparents have adjusted their schedule so they get to spend time with the kids."

Overall, Knapp said, "Parents seem to be

overwhelmingly in support of it." This impression was confirmed by a survey the school sent out to parents: 143 parents voted in favor of the schedule and 10 were opposed.

The local school committee (Charles is a site-based school), the school board, and the Richmond Education Association also support the schedule, which is written into the teachers' contract. But local support is not enough to secure a waiver. The school must convince the IDOE that the non-instructional time is serving the needs of students, not just of teachers. "We have to demonstrate that educationally it's sound," Knapp said, "that it's beneficial for students and not just feel-good stuff." In addition to the parent surveys, Charles provides portfolios, test scores, and other data.

So far, the data apparently have borne out the value of the schedule. Although the percentage of students from poor and single-parent families has risen considerably over the past five years—the percentage of students in the free-lunch program jumped from 4% to 31%, for example—test scores have remained stable. "Factoring all those things in, we're doing real well," said Knapp.

The annual waiver process is demanding, usually requiring an appeal after the initial application. That can be discouraging, Knapp said, but so far it has been worth the effort. "Teachers need that time so desperately," she said. "It's something everybody should be able to do."

We changed over to an inclusion model for special education, and it was so much easier because our teachers were available to do the kind of planning they needed to do to make those adjustments.

—Kristi Knapp

mutual visitation to cost-saving purchase of resources administered by school districts or educational service centers.

The point of school-based professional development is that the needs of each school, as defined by the staff at that school, play a major role in determining the form that professional development will take. The school is the starting point for professional development planning, not a fortress with unbreachable walls.

Q: *What about outside consultants?*

Letting teachers determine their own road to growth does not preclude the use of outside expertise. It simply means that teachers are involved in selecting the activities and consultants they need, rather than being forced to sit through sessions imposed upon them by someone else.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OFTEN FAIL TO CAPITALIZE ON THE EXPERTISE OF MASTER TEACHERS ON THE STAFF OF MOST SCHOOLS.

It is true, however, that professional development programs often fail to capitalize on the expertise of master teachers on the staff of most schools. As a teacher in one of the focus groups put it, "You have to go at least 15 miles away to be considered an expert." Greater recognition and use of this on-site expertise is encouraged.

But there are plenty of effective consultants out there, and schools may need to capitalize on their expertise as well—as long as it serves the overall professional development and improvement plans of the school.

Q: *We are subject to a number of state and district mandates. How do we reconcile those with school-based plans for professional development?*

Schools often have to implement reforms that have been passed down from above. Even these cases, however, need not preclude teacher involvement in professional development. As Sparks and fellow professional development expert Susan Loucks-Horsley wrote in 1990, "When teachers cannot be involved in initial decisions regarding staff development (e.g., when it is mandated by state legislation or when it supports the use of district-wide curriculum), their involvement in decisions about the 'hows' and 'whens' of implementation can be important to success."

Still, the trend in state policy in Indiana over the past five or six years has been to decentralize, to offer schools more and more

opportunities for self-determination. The Indiana School Academic Improvement Program (formerly called Indiana 2000) and Freeway Schools are but two examples. School-based professional development complements this trend, and state and local officials can take steps to facilitate such an approach.

Principle #2

Effective professional development uses coaching and other follow-up procedures.

	Components of Effective Training
✓	*Duration:* a series of activities spaced over time.
✓	*Scheme:* theory/demonstration/practice & feedback/coaching.
✓	*Follow-up:* some form of coaching or other structured interaction among participating teachers.
✓	*Cadre:* a group of teachers who receive additional training and who can continue training other teachers when outside consultants depart.

Under a school-based approach to professional development, skills training is no longer considered the single path to teacher growth. However, it will often form a part of a school improvement plan, and when it does, it needs to be conducted in the most effective manner.

As mentioned several times earlier, single training sessions with no follow-up are largely ineffective. Professional development activities that deploy sessions spaced over time have better results. If skills training is to have any lasting effect on teachers' behavior in the classroom, however, follow-up procedures, especially coaching, are vital.

Bruce Joyce, Beverly Showers, and their colleagues have identified a combination of training procedures that yield impressive changes in teachers' knowledge, skills, and actual classroom behavior. The procedures, which need not be followed in strict order, are as follows:

- **THEORY:** lecture, reading, discussion, presentation of research, and other activities for understanding the rationale underlying new teaching skills;
- **DEMONSTRATION:** modeling skills (live or on video) so teachers can observe them in action;
- **PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK:** opportunities to practice under simulated conditions and obtain input on one's progress; and
- **COACHING:** structured assistance, observation, feedback, discussion, and support as teachers begin to incorporate new skills into their classroom repertoire.

As the table below suggests, the first three procedures have proven reasonably successful in increasing teachers' knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, the mere development of new teaching skills does not guarantee they will be used in the classroom. As the

TRAINING PROCEDURES AND THEIR EFFECT ON TEACHERS

TRAINING PROCEDURES	EFFECT ON TEACHERS (MEASURED BY EFFECT SIZES*)		
	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	USE OF SKILL IN THE CLASSROOM
THEORY	0.15	0.50	0.00
THEORY/DEMONSTRATION	0.66	0.86	0.00
THEORY/DEMONSTRATION/ PRACTICE & FEEDBACK	1.31	1.18	0.39
THEORY/DEMONSTRATION/ PRACTICE & FEEDBACK/COACHING	2.71	1.25	1.68

* Effect size is a statistical calculation used to measure the magnitude of the effect of a given procedure—in this case, the effect of various training procedures on teachers' knowledge, skill, and actual use of the skill in the classroom. Technically, effect size is the difference between the mean of the experimental and control groups divided by the standard deviation of the control group. Hence, an effect size of 1.00 means that subjects in the experimental group scored 1 standard deviation higher than subjects in the control group.

SOURCE: Adapted from Joyce & Showers, 1995, p. 112

third column in the table shows, none of these three procedures, alone or in combination, had any significant effect on teachers' use of the skill in the classroom. However, when coaching is included, significant increases in classroom use occur.

There are two main types of coaching: coaching by experts (trainers, for example) and coaching by peers, that is, giving teachers the opportunity to observe one another, offer feedback and support, develop curricula together, share lessons and materials, and discuss ideas and problems. Interestingly, some research suggests that, despite the greater expertise that trainers bring to the coaching situation, peer coaching may actually be more effective in changing teachers' behavior than coaching by experts. In fact, simply scheduling opportunities for groups of teachers to interact, even if the interactions do not take the form of classroom observation, may enhance the effectiveness of professional development workshops.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

If outside consultants are used, it may also be advisable to form a cadre of especially talented and motivated teachers who receive additional training. That way, when the consultants leave, training can continue with teachers now assuming the role of experts. Teachers also tend to be more favorably disposed to training that comes from fellow teachers rather than from consultants.

Whatever form they take, follow-up activities are an essential part of successful professional development programs. Teachers need time to absorb new knowledge, practice new techniques, adapt what they have learned to their particular classroom situations, and continue working with experts or peers to consolidate gains.

Q & A

Q: *How can peer coaching be more effective than coaching by experts?*

In a small but suggestive study reported in 1986, researcher Georgea Mohlman Sparks compared the effects of three types of professional development activities on the performance of teachers: (a) workshops alone, (b) workshops plus coaching by the trainer, and (c) workshops plus peer coaching. She found that teachers in the third group improved more than those who were coached by experts (and that both improved more than teachers cut adrift after the workshops). Sparks offered three reasons for this finding:

- Teachers rarely get to see one another in action. "Just watching a colleague teach may have been a powerful learning experience," she writes.
- The peer coaches had to analyze the behavior of other teachers, which may have helped them analyze their own behavior more accurately.
- Structured interactions with other teachers may have led to a heightened sense of trust and esprit de corps.

Q: *Some teachers feel uncomfortable when other teachers observe and comment on their performance. Can teachers benefit from forms of peer coaching other than in-class observation and feedback?*

As a matter of fact, in their latest book (published in 1995), Joyce and Showers explain that they no longer include formal feedback as a component of peer coaching. Too many teachers were telling them that when they observed other teachers and offered feedback, they found themselves slipping into the mode of clinical supervision and evaluation, despite their efforts not to do so.

Indeed, Joyce and Showers have now reversed the meaning of the word "coach." When one teacher observes another, the coach is no longer the person observing, but the person being observed. The observer is learning from the teacher, not scrutinizing his or her performance for the purpose of offering advice.

Joyce and Showers also redouble their emphasis on other aspects of peer coaching. "The primary activity of peer-coaching study teams," they write, "is the collaborative planning and development of curriculum and instruction in pursuit of their shared goals." So interactions of all different sorts between teachers—from discussion sessions to sharing of materials—assume as much importance as observation.

Now, many schools will not want to throw out feedback entirely, whether from a peer or an expert. If teachers are comfortable being observed, and if they understand that no one will be rendering a verdict on their abilities, then those sorts of interactions can be quite beneficial as well.

Q: *What percentage of training funds should be reserved for follow-up activities?*

The National Staff Development Council suggests that as much as 50% of training funds be devoted to follow-up activities.

Principle #3

Effective professional development is collaborative.

	Activities That Promote Collaboration in Schools
✓	Common planning time
✓	Discussion groups
✓	Peer study groups
✓	Peer coaching
✓	Committees with decision-making power over issues of real import
✓	Teacher involvement in designing and implementing professional development activities
✓	Leadership teams
✓	Teacher networks
✓	Computer networks

At present, most schools are organized in ways that isolate teachers from their peers. Teachers spend most of the day enclosed within the walls of their classrooms. When they do interact with other teachers, it is too often on the most superficial level, over a quick sandwich during a half-hour lunch break, before they're off to their own classrooms again.

However, professional development, like school improvement in general, works best as collaborative effort. Each school needs to become a *community* in which teachers have structured opportunities to participate in decision making, see each other in action, solve problems together, and share ideas in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Even the most motivated individual teachers are unlikely to sustain innovations in their own class-

rooms without the support and participation of colleagues. The school as a whole is even less likely to improve without productive interactions among all, or at least most, teachers.

Unfortunately, breaking down isolation and fostering genuine collaboration is never easy. Norms of isolation run deep in many schools. As Michael Fullan, Dean of Education at the University of Toronto, pointed out in a 1990 article, "One person's isolation is another person's autonomy; one person's collaboration is another person's conspiracy." Teachers may cherish their solitude because it gives them a territory to call their own, provides them with an opportunity to get work done, or shields them from unwanted scrutiny. Researchers Andy Hargreaves and Ruth Dawe have cautioned against what they call "contrived collegiality," in which superficial forms of collaboration are imposed by administrators upon a school culture that is still isolationist at heart. Schools need to foster genuine collaboration that stems from a commitment to shared goals and a recognition of the necessity to work together to achieve them.

The first step in fostering such collaboration might be arranging for common planning time for grade-level teachers to share lessons or develop a team-taught unit. It might begin with a group of like-minded teachers who read an article or book in common and get together to discuss it. It might start through the formation of small committees with real decision-making power on important issues, such as how to spend school-improvement award money or how to coordinate curriculum across grades. It might be spurred by an attempt to discuss a genuine educational issue at a faculty meeting, instead of the usual administrative minutia. It might require bolder steps, such as adding an extra period to the day for collaborative professional development efforts, as has happened at Marion High School (see profile on pages 33-34).

THE IMPORTANT THING IS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS (BOTH PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS) TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COLLABORATIVE WORK, TAKE STEPS TO OVERCOME ISOLATION, AND NURTURE THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT BEGIN TO FORM.

Two types of collaborative activity mentioned earlier have shown particular promise in encouraging teachers to work productively together, especially if they are invited rather than forced to participate: (a) teacher involvement in designing and implementing professional development and (b) peer coaching. Teachers and administrators may also profit from learning skills that promote collaboration: group facilitation, conflict management, and the like.

Whatever course of action is taken at a particular school, the important thing is for school leaders (both principals and teachers) to acknowledge the significance of collaborative work, take steps to overcome isolation, and nurture the relationships that begin to

form. Genuine collaboration is not easy, but as many of the schools profiled in these pages demonstrate, it is possible, and it is fruitful.

Although collaboration within individual schools is essential to school-based professional development, teachers can also benefit from collaboration that extends beyond school boundaries. One well-regarded form of collaboration is the collegial network, through which groups of teachers from across the district, state, or nation join together in studying, developing, implementing, and discussing new approaches, often working together with university faculty members and representatives of the private sector. Some networks, such as the National Writing Project, the Collaboratives for Humanities and the Arts (CHART), and the Urban Mathematics Collaboratives, are devoted to subject matter content and the instructional strategies that accompany such content. Others, such as the Coalition of Essential Schools and the Foxfire Teacher Outreach Network, focus on particular educational philosophies or instructional methods. Members of collegial networks attend conferences, publish newsletters, and exchange information through correspondence and computer networks.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNET MAKES CORRESPONDENCE AMONG TEACHERS FAR REMOVED FROM ONE ANOTHER MUCH FASTER AND EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE.

The evolution of the Internet makes correspondence among teachers far removed from one another much faster and easier than ever before, whether it's part of an established teacher network or not. Through listservs, newsgroups, and other formats, users can interact with hundreds or thousands of experts and peers from all over the world at the touch of a button, asking questions, sharing experiences, discussing issues. According to a 1992 article by National Education Association researchers Gary Watts and Shari Castle, such networks can "reduce . . . teacher isolation by building communities of learners without regard to location."

Q & A

Q: *Should we address the issue of interpersonal relationships at our school before we begin collaborating?*

There's no need to deal with interpersonal relationships outside the context of collaborative professional development activities. The ideal approach is to set the school improvement process in motion and address interpersonal problems if they arise. Addressing such problems may involve the mediation of a trusted leader within the school or an external facilitator or change agent from without.

(Continued on page 19.)

I don't believe folks can do what they need to do in the classroom if they don't get outside of the classroom.

—Phyllis Coe
Principal, Cold Spring Elementary School

• Principles in Practice •

COLD SPRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

And the Indiana Center For Collaborative Education

Corporation: Indianapolis Public Schools
Principal: Phyllis Coe
Address: 3650 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis, IN 46222
Phone: 317-226-4155

Like teachers in only a handful of other Indiana schools, teachers at Cold Spring Elementary in Indianapolis had the opportunity to discuss what they wanted their school to be like before it ever opened.

"One of the reasons why the school is so excellent—by that I mean everybody seems to be on the same page, focused on the same philosophy and mission—is because the core of teachers started off together, and they had the time to come together and plan and write curriculum," said Cold Spring principal Phyllis Coe. Thanks to a federal Magnet Options grant, teachers were paid a stipend to begin planning six months before the school opened in 1990. They also received training in the democratic process at the Institute for Democracy in Ohio.

The grant continued to support professional development efforts through the first three years of the school's life. Some of these funds provided release time so teachers could visit other schools, attend conferences, or meet during the school day. Most of the funding was used, however, to pay teachers stipends to work together for five and a half hours per week outside of regular class hours.

After the federal money dried up, Cold Spring vigorously pursued other grants to fund professional development activities. A Re:Learning grant enabled teachers to participate in TREK sessions, including an intensive week-long session over the summer and follow-up activities with partner schools. A grant from the Indianapolis-based C.L.A.S.S organization (Community Leaders Allied for Superior Schools) supported teachers' participation in SPARCS training and follow-up activities with an advisor. In fact, several Cold Spring teachers have themselves become advisors for SPARCS, a program based on Piaget's developmental levels of learning. "The amount of professional training invested in by staff has empowered the teachers to become teachers of teachers," said Coe.

An Indiana 2000 grant, a restructuring-with-technology grant, and IPS staff development money have covered additional professional development opportunities.

Finally, Cold Spring was one of five Indiana

THE AMOUNT OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING INVESTED IN BY STAFF HAS EMPOWERED THE TEACHERS TO BECOME TEACHERS OF TEACHERS.

—PHYLLIS COE

schools who together received a $50,000 grant from the Center for Collaborative Education in New York to help establish the Indiana Center for Collaborative Education. The other four schools are Gosport Elementary, Indian Creek Elementary (Lawrence Township), Maplewood Elementary (Connersville), and Harmony School (a private school in Bloomington). "The purpose is to bring schools together to have conversations around common beliefs about what should occur in the classroom, what should occur in teaching and learning," said Coe. The conversation centers on the nine common principles championed by the Coalition for Essential Schools (which is also involved in the Re:Learning effort).

Each of the five schools does a "climate audit," an intense self-examination of educational philosophy and practice involving all staff members. Then teams of teachers, students, parents, and community members from each school visit all the other schools—during school hours—and compare what they see with the way the schools have described themselves. So each school benefits in three ways: from self-scrutiny, from scrutiny by teams from four other schools, and from the opportunity to observe these schools in action.

According to Coe, ongoing professional development will continue to be a top priority at the school. "I don't believe folks can do what they need to do in the classroom if they don't get outside of the classroom," she said. "The philosophy of lifelong learning is alive and well and modeled by the teachers and passed on to the students here at Cold Spring School."

Q: *Won't collaboration require a large degree of trust among teachers, administrators, and parents?*

The issue of **trust** loomed large in all three of the focus groups with teachers. Teachers have to trust administrators to offer continued support for their efforts, not change direction every year or reassert authority in areas they had promised to entrust to teachers. Teachers have to earn the trust of parents, who sometimes feel that unless teachers are in the classroom, they're not doing their job. "The public needs to understand better why we need professional development," said one teacher.

Perhaps most importantly, teachers have to trust each other to be coaches and fellow travelers, not judges. "You've got to trust that person, trust the feedback," said one. "You must take the fear element out of it," said another.

Ultimately, said a third, "Teachers have to believe that their vision will be realized," and this belief is built in large measure on the trust people have in each other's integrity and commitment. Like collaboration, trust must be nurtured step by step and reinforced constantly by leaders at the school and district level.

Q: *How do we gain the trust of parents?*

The most effective way to gain the trust of parents is to communicate with them—through personal conversations, school newsletters, articles in the township weekly, public meetings, and so forth. Let parents know what changes are under consideration and solicit their feedback. Teachers and administrators in many schools have successfully made the following case to parents that professional development is vital:

TRUST MUST BE NURTURED STEP BY STEP AND REINFORCED CONSTANTLY BY LEADERS AT THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEVEL.

> Doctors, lawyers, engineers—indeed, people in every profession—have to retool constantly to keep up with changing times and expanding knowledge.

Parents wouldn't want a surgeon who got his or her medical degree in the 1960s and hadn't learned anything since to operate on their child. It's the same with their child's teachers:

- Considerable advances have been made in technology, in instructional strategies, and in the knowledge of how children learn; teachers need to bring those advances to bear in the classroom.
- Significant changes have taken place in the student population; teachers need to respond to those changes.

- New demands have been placed on schools and on future workers; teachers need to help children be smarter than ever to compete in the economy of the 21st century.

The only way teachers can do the above is by continuing to learn. Occasionally they may have to leave the classroom to observe other teachers or to attend a series of workshops. But the school has made arrangements for children to continue learning while their regular classroom teacher is gone. And the advances teachers make in their intellectual growth ultimately will benefit children.

Q: *Can you tell me in a little more detail about computer networks?*

This isn't the place to go into a detailed explanation of the Internet. To give some indication of its potential for linking teachers electronically, however, one particularly promising aspect for teachers—the listserv—is described below.

A listserv is a computer program that automatically manages an electronic mailing list (e-mail for short). Once someone subscribes (by e-mailing a short message to the listserv's computer), any e-mail message sent to the mailing list address automatically goes to everyone else who is subscribed—and that may be hundreds or even thousands of people around the world. Any e-mail message any other subscriber sends to the list automatically appears in everyone else's mailbox as well. It is a marvelous—and rapid—means for people with common interests to share information and ideas. What's more, listservs do not charge for their services.

A brief search for listservs of interest to K-12 teachers yields sites that focus on art education, at-risk children, early childhood education, geography education, music education, science education, social studies, teachers of English as a second language, and dozens of other topics of direct interest to teachers.

Principle #4

Effective professional development is embedded in the daily lives of teachers, providing for continuous growth.

✓	**Continuous Learning for Teachers**
✓	Professional development needs to be scheduled appropriately in the school day and year of teachers.
✓	Professional development needs to be ongoing.
✓	Professional development needs to be institutionalized in school district policies and budgets and in school procedures.
✓	Teachers and administrators must develop an ethos of inquiry, constantly reflecting on their own practice, seeking new knowledge, solving problems, trying new approaches, and assessing the results.
✓	Schools must provide adequate time and resources for extended learning opportunities for teachers, including multiple workshops, peer coaching, discussion, and research.

A new concept of the productive employee is emerging in some American business corporations. As layers of middle management evaporate, many frontline workers are being given more decision-making authority along with more responsibility for results. Workers accustomed to performing a single task over and over again for years may now be working in teams, making schedules, solving problems, and monitoring results.

Of course, this approach requires continuous training and retraining for workers. "High-performance work organizations require very large corporate investments in continuing education and training," wrote Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker in *Thinking for a Living* (1992). "The successful firm is the firm that organizes itself as a learning system in which every part is designed to promote and accelerate both individual learning and collective learning—and to put that learning to productive use." The Saturn company, for example, provided its original employees with more than 400 hours of training over their first few months, and every

employee is still expected to devote at least 92 hours to training every year—almost 5% of their total hours, year after year.

If continuous learning is important for workers in organizations that deal in things (such as cars or refrigerators), it is surely even more important for workers in organizations that deal in knowledge, especially for teachers in schools.

However, teachers aren't required to learn continuously in any significant way; indeed, most do not even have the opportunity to do so. Indiana teachers do have to take six hours of approved college coursework (typically two courses) every five years or the equivalent in certification renewal units to renew their teaching licenses, and they generally get small salary increases for progress toward graduate degrees. In some districts, they may attend a day or two of inservice training each year. If funding and release time are available, a few may have the opportunity to attend an occasional workshop. For the most part, however, it is a catch-as-catch-can system, left largely to the motivation of individual teachers. Considering that teachers spend 25 to 30 hours a week in their classrooms, and many more hours preparing and grading, it is a wonder that they have the energy, much less the time, to continue learning.

IF THE ADULTS IN A SCHOOL AREN'T EXCITED ABOUT LEARNING, THE STUDENTS AREN'T LIKELY TO BE VERY EXCITED EITHER.

If school improvement is to have any chance of success, the patchwork nature of professional development will have to change. Continuous learning opportunities must become part of teachers' everyday working lives and part of every school's institutional priorities. Administrators and teachers will have to develop an *ethos of inquiry:*

- **EXAMINING** their own practices and trying new ones;
- **LEARNING** about subject matter, instructional methods, and student development;
- **QUESTIONING** what they learn in light of their own experience;
- **THINKING** deeply about overall school improvement; and
- **WORKING TOGETHER** to enact that improvement.

As professional development experts Bruce Joyce, James Wolf, and Emily Calhoun put it in their 1993 book, *The Self Renewing School,* "Teachers become reflective practitioners who continually expand their repertoire of tools and study the effects of these strategies on students." In fact, teachers are being encouraged to become researchers in their own right: "to act not only as consumers of research but also as critics and producers of research—to be

participants in a more visible and consequential manner," as University of California-Berkeley professor Judith Warren Little wrote in 1993.

Teachers become visible not just to each other, but to students as well. If the adults in a school aren't excited about learning, the students aren't likely to be very excited either. But if the adults are taking risks, striving to grow, and working together to solve problems, students will be more inclined to do the same. They just might begin to understand that learning isn't something one does to pass a test or get a diploma; it is a way to live.

Q & A

Q: *Is it practical to call for continuous learning, given the already unrelenting demands on teachers' time?*

In most schools, changes will have to be made to carve out time in teachers' schedules for the types of learning activities proposed here. In the section on time at the end of this chapter (pages 32, 35-37) and in chapters 3 and 4, specific suggestions are offered to help make that possible.

Q: *Most teachers are intrinsically motivated to keep learning, but shouldn't there be some external rewards for professional growth as well?*

According to many teachers in the focus groups, what teachers want for their professional development efforts, more than anything else, is recognition and respect: some form of acknowledgment from school or school district administrators that the work they are doing is valuable. "It's not so much money that we want as it is time and appreciation," said one participant. "Just treat teachers as professionals." Even little things, like providing a meal when teachers attend an evening session, can let them know that their efforts are appreciated.

Now, there are programs in Indiana where teachers receive material awards for continued learning. In the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, for example, teachers accumulate points for training, practicing new skills, and incorporating the skills into their classroom repertoire. The points can be redeemed for stipends or the equivalent in professional development expenses. In other districts, teachers who complete a computer training program get to keep the computers.

But the greatest incentive would be to build time for quality professional development into teachers' workdays and to recognize teachers publicly for their professional development efforts. This kind of commitment to continued learning and school improvement legitimizes professional learning in both teachers' and parents' eyes.

Q: *What are some ways teachers can become researchers?*

One form of teacher research is called *action research,* defined in a 1993 article by Emily Calhoun as disciplined inquiry conducted by teachers and administrators in an effort to improve the performance of schools. As action researchers, individual teachers, groups of teachers, or entire faculties:

- **DIAGNOSE** problems in student learning or overall school performance;
- **SEARCH** for solutions (e.g., new teaching strategies), seeking information and technical assistance from the literature or from outside experts such as university personnel;
- **TRY OUT** promising possibilities in the classroom;
- **MONITOR** the results of the new approaches; and
- **DISCUSS** the results with each other, with outside experts, with parents, even with students.

If the new teaching strategy is not having the desired effects, teachers can modify it or try something else and begin the cycle again.

Teachers at some of the Indiana schools profiled in these pages are conducting action research on reforms at their schools. Individual teachers at other Indiana schools are also conducting action research on their own, and some have already published their results.

According to many who have studied action research, this form of inquiry can revitalize a school, especially if done collaboratively. It can instill habits of reflection, problem solving, and collegiality among teachers. It can enhance teacher professionalism and morale by giving teachers the satisfaction of actively producing knowledge rather than passively consuming it. And—to emphasize this point again—action research can serve as a model for students, as they see their teachers taking risks, working together to solve problems, and learning continuously. *(Continued on page 27.)*

I am very excited about this new way of doing professional development because it's a win-win situation for everybody: the teachers and administrators, the university students and professors, and most importantly, the students.

—Gary Pellico
Principal, Lynwood Elementary

• Principles in Practice •

LYNWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Beyond the Professional Development School

Corporation: MSD Decatur Township
Principal: Gary Pellico
Address: 4640 Sante Fe Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241
Phone: 317-243-7559

A professional development school is an elementary or secondary school where teachers and university professors work together to train teacher education students from the university, try out innovations in the classroom, and conduct research. Lynwood Elementary School and MSD Decatur Township are working together with the University of Indianapolis (U of I) to create professional development schools that meet the needs of both learning communities.

At the school where he was principal before coming to Lynwood, Gary Pellico and U of I professor Nancy Steffel had worked together on a professional development school project of sorts. "Nancy would have projects for her students," Pellico said, "and they would come in to our school and do their projects. I would also have projects that I wanted to have done with our students, and we would do those projects and the university students would participate. In addition, our staff would go over to the university for professional development opportunities on our professional development or PBA half-days."

Lynwood's current collaboration with U of I goes beyond this kind of a project. "That was the old model," Pellico said. "What we've created here with the help and support of both our institutions is a project coordinated through similar goals and philosophies. Our goal was to help teachers make changes in what they do every day in the classroom. The university students as well as their professors are in the classroom on a regular basis with our teachers. All of us are growing together, with the bottom line being the improvement of instruction for our students."

The professional development focus at Lynwood during the 1995-96 school year was literacy, with an emphasis on literature-based reading strategies and the reading/writing process. A steering committee composed of the dean of the U of I College of Education, U of I professors, and MSD Decatur Township administrators and teachers met several times to help design the program, which met both the university's need for preservice teachers to work in real school settings and the school district's need to align instruction with curriculum.

During the fall semester, 13 of Lynwood's 35 (FTE) teachers signed up for a three-hour graduate course on literacy, which was taught on site during the school day by U of I professor Mary Lynn Woods. (A second

section of the course was offered to other teachers from the district and other districts in the evening.) Meanwhile, Steffel was conducting her undergraduate methods course on site at Lynwood.

While the Lynwood teachers were attending the graduate course, the undergraduates subbed for them, under the supervision of Steffel and Rick Breault (another U of I professor). Both Steffel and Breault became known throughout the building and worked with almost every teacher there at some point during the year. They also attended and presented at staff meetings. The preservice teachers, who were district-approved substitute teachers (but were not paid), also became involved in various activities around the school through community service time.

Between meetings of the graduate class, Woods was available for follow-up training. "After we talked about strategies in class, the professor would then demonstrate and model those strategies in teachers' classrooms," said Pellico. "In this way, we could see the strategies put into place with our own students. And the professor could also be with the teachers in the classroom to provide feedback and clarification as well as see firsthand how the strategies were working."

AFTER WE TALKED ABOUT STRATEGIES IN CLASS, THE PROFESSOR WOULD THEN DEMONSTRATE AND MODEL THOSE STRATEGIES IN TEACHERS' CLASSROOMS.

—GARY PELLICO

A side benefit was the peer coaching that developed. "Teachers would go back and talk with each other and other colleagues about how the strategies worked," said Pellico. "This was a great way of reinforcing and encouraging people to take risks. Teachers felt supported and could get immediate feedback."

During the second semester the two sessions of the graduate course were combined into a follow-up three hour course on literacy, which was offered in the evening. The class broke into small study groups, each focusing on a particular idea or approach that interested them. The goal of each group was to put together a notebook that showed others how a literature-based approach might be implemented in the classroom.

"I am very excited about this new way of doing professional development," said Pellico, "because it's a win-win situation for everybody: the teachers and administrators, the university students and professors, and most importantly, the students." The Lynwood teachers were given release time and graduate credit for study, demonstration, practice, feedback, coaching, and discussion right in their own school. The design of the project was all based on identified district and university priorities. The U of I education students got practical experience. The U of I professors were able to reconnect their teaching to the daily exigencies of actual public school practice and tailor their lessons accordingly. And Lynwood students are beneficiaries of new teaching strategies put into practice by teachers who have learned how to use them. What's more, the program cost little more than classroom space at the elementary school for the courses to be taught.

"This program has just far outdistanced the dream that we had for it," said Pellico. "I see a difference in our instructional practices on a daily basis. It has just been wonderful to see the difference we're making in kids."

Principle #5

Effective professional development focuses on student performance and is evaluated at least in part on that basis.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Evaluations of professional development and school reform should:

- ✓ Document effects on student performance.
- ✓ Document effects on teachers.
- ✓ Begin in the early stages of professional development and continue after the activity has ended.
- ✓ Provide continuous feedback to teachers.
- ✓ Use a variety of data sources such as achievement test scores, student portfolios, questionnaires, interviews, and surveys.

All the rhetoric about professional development and school improvement, all the theories about program design and peer coaching, all the action research and collaboration in the world ultimately give way to a single question: Is professional development working?

To be more specific: Is professional development reinvigorating teachers? Is it expanding their repertoire and improving their ability to teach? Is it leading to new roles and responsibilities for teachers within the school organization? Is it contributing to a richer, more positive school culture?

> ***Most importantly, is professional development leading to improved student performance?***

Unless student performance improves, professional development cannot be considered a complete success.

The only way to answer these questions with rigor is to conduct some sort of evaluation—not simply the standard five-point scale

questionnaire used after so many inservice sessions, asking participants if the speaker was interesting and the visual aids useful, but a multifaceted, long-term evaluation that examines professional development in some depth and tries to determine its effects on teachers and students.

The most helpful evaluations begin early in the professional development planning process and continue after the particular professional development activity is completed, serving two related purposes: (1) they help inform and improve the implementation process, and (2) they document effects, particularly on students.

NOT ONLY DO EVALUATIONS PROVIDE INVALUABLE FEEDBACK FOR TEACHERS, BUT THEY MAY ALSO HELP CONVINCE SKEPTICAL PARENTS AND SCHOOL BOARDS THAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS MORE THAN JUST A VACATION FROM THE CLASSROOM.

Not only do evaluations provide invaluable feedback for teachers, but they may also help convince skeptical parents and school boards that professional development is more than just a vacation from the classroom. The promise of a rigorous evaluation that focuses on student performance says, "We are not simply interested in our own growth. We are interested, as always, in the growth of children's minds. And we intend to provide concrete evidence that our new approach is helping them learn more. If the evidence suggests otherwise, then we will alter or abandon our approach, using what we've learned in our ongoing attempts to improve the education children are receiving."

Q & A

Q: *How in-depth should an evaluation be?*

An ideal evaluation would include baseline data on students (e.g., test scores, grades, attendance rates, discipline referrals), teachers (e.g., current knowledge and teaching skills), and the school as a whole (e.g., policies, procedures, role of teachers in decision making, degree of collaboration among teachers). It would gather data on the implementation process, such as teacher involvement, types of training, and extent of follow-up. It would assess changes in teacher behavior and in the operation of the entire school. Most importantly, an evaluation would attempt to determine if student performance (e.g., achievement, discipline, attendance, etc.) had improved. This kind of in-depth evaluation would require the use of many different sources, such as questionnaires, observations, school records, achievement tests, and student portfolios.

Now, very few schools have the time, money, or technical expertise to conduct an evaluation of this sort, particularly when

whole schools are involved rather than just a handful of teachers. Indeed, systematic evaluation is the one component that seems to be missing even in the Indiana schools with the best professional development programs.

Still, some sort of evaluation process that (a) provides continuous feedback to teachers, (b) uses data, and (c) focuses in part on student outcomes is important to the success of professional development activities, especially if the evaluation is conducted by the teachers themselves. Indeed, involvement in an evaluation serves as another opportunity for observation, reflection, and self-analysis. At the very least, school professionals need to begin thinking in terms of results when they begin framing professional development proposals. Instead of buying into reform ideas because they sound exciting, teachers need to ask up front how they will improve student achievement and how that improvement could be demonstrated.

Q: *What if we evaluate our professional development and find out that it isn't working very well? Will we be penalized?*

No one should ever be penalized for taking risks to improve learning opportunities for students. As a teacher in one of the focus groups said, "If you try something and it doesn't work, there shouldn't be repercussions. It shouldn't be a negative thing. Failure provides valuable information too." That's exactly right: failed attempts at reform can advance our knowledge of what works and what doesn't work in schools as surely as successful ones do.

NO ONE SHOULD EVER BE PENALIZED FOR TAKING RISKS TO IMPROVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.

According to an oft-cited 1982 article by Judith Warren Little, one of the hallmarks of a successful school is precisely a commitment to risk-taking and continuous improvement. Teachers in such schools regularly examine their teaching, try new practices, and evaluate the results. And they are confident that, succeed or fail, they will be supported by colleagues and the administration. Nothing could kill this spirit of risk-taking faster than punishing pioneers if their efforts are not immediately successful.

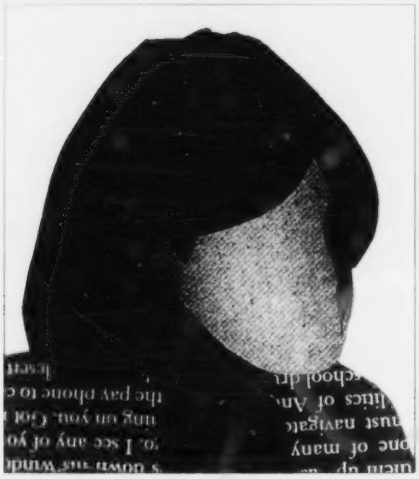
Given a positive approach to evaluation—for helping answer questions and guide practice, not for meting out punishment—almost all of the teachers in the focus groups approved of evaluation in professional development. As one said, "By evaluating, you make professional development work."

Conditions for Effective Professional Development

Without the proper setting and support, even the best professional development initiatives undertaken by the brightest and most motivated school professionals are in danger of withering on the vine. On the other hand, in a school where the principal is a strong advocate of continuous learning, where district policies and resources support school improvement efforts, and where time is built into the schedule, the odds are much better that teachers will participate in and profit from professional development, to the ultimate benefit of the students.

The three most important conditions for effective professional development are:

1. **Leadership**
2. **Policy and Resource Support**
3. **Time**



Leadership

Capable, active leadership is vital to the success of professional development projects—or of any school improvement projects, for that matter. On the other hand, indifference (or worse, outright hostility) on the part of leaders makes it difficult for professional development initiatives to get under way, much less to be sustained during the first trying months of implementation or to be institutionalized after the initial enthusiasm fades away.

What does it mean for leaders—particularly principals, but also school board members, superintendents, and teachers in leadership positions—to support professional development? The most important characteristics of top-notch leadership are:

- **Advocacy:** Good leaders place a high priority on continuous professional growth. According to a 1991 article by Milbrey McLaughlin, co-director of the Center for Research on the Context of Teaching at Stanford University, leaders are responsible "for establishing the norms, values, and expectations essential to consequential professional development. . . . One way leaders accomplish this is by establishing professional growth and problem solving as a priority for the school, and by making it 'safe' for teachers to critically examine their practice and take risks."

- **Participation:** Principals who participate in professional development activities alongside teachers lead by example and help break down hierarchies that may inhibit communication.

- **Assistance:** Good leaders try to remove administrative obstacles to professional development and seek resources for teachers in the form of money, materials, and—especially—time.

- **Problem solving:** As Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun put it, "The most effective leaders do not simply follow established formulas for getting things done, but are effective diagnosticians, problem solvers, and leaders of others to find needs and create solutions."

- **Pressure:** Good leaders do not operate exclusively in the realm of sweetness and light, but may have occasion to apply a little pressure to move complacent teachers forward. A teacher quoted approvingly by Judith Warren Little describes it as follows: "I'm not enough of a dreamer to think you're going to get a whole faculty behind something without a little coercion, a little polite coercion. And if you don't do that you don't ever have any growth in your faculty."

- **Collegiality:** "Administrators exercise strong leadership by promoting a 'norm of collegiality,'" write Dennis Sparks and Susan Loucks-Horsley, "minimizing status differences between themselves and their staff members, promoting informal communication, and reducing their own need to use formal controls to achieve coordination." This does not mean they do not exercise power when necessary, but that they respect the expertise of teachers, seek consensus when possible, discuss teaching and learning alternatives with teachers, and establish planning committees and other formal structures for promoting teacher communication and input.

Resource and Policy Support

One of the most important forms of support has already been mentioned: leaders on the school and district level who show through their words, priorities, and actions that they champion the cause of continuous professional development for teachers.

Other forms of support are vital as well. One is the provision of adequate resources. Teachers in a school are well placed to understand the problems of the students they teach; they also have talents important in overcoming those problems. Nevertheless, people and ideas from outside the school can play a critical role in school improvement as well. Thus, teachers need access to other resources such as research, examples of effective practice in other schools, the assistance of accomplished practitioners, and the creative ideas of experts in subject matter, instructional methods, and school organization.

TEACHERS NEED ACCESS TO RESOURCES SUCH AS RESEARCH, EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN OTHER SCHOOLS, AND THE CREATIVE IDEAS OF EXPERTS.

Finally, just as professional development activities at the school level need to be integrated within the framework of a coherent school mission, so do policies and practices need to be coordinated at higher levels. "Only if staff development is embedded in the philosophy and organizational structure of schools and districts can a culture of continuous growth thrive," write Susan Loucks-Horsley and her colleagues. Policy coherence can keep schools from being inundated with conflicting demands.

Ideally, then, school and district (and state) improvement plans are coordinated into a seamless whole targeted at increasing student learning, and the district has an infrastructure of policies and resources in place that support continued professional development for teachers.

Time

"Reforms conducted on the fringes of the school day will never become an integral part of the school," wrote RAND researchers Susan Purnell and Paul Hill in *Time for Reform* (1992), reflecting the belief of just about everyone who has given serious thought to the subject of time and professional development. Without adequate time built into the regular school schedule for involvement in decision making, follow-up, collaboration, continuous study, and evaluation, the odds that any professional development initiative will benefit teachers and students are low. *(Continued on page 35.)*

At Marion, all teachers get an extra period every day for professional development in addition to their prep period. No minutes have been added to the school day or the teachers' contract day. No minutes have been subtracted from instructional time.

• Principles in Practice •

MARION HIGH SCHOOL

Daily Professional Development Period

Corporation: Marion Community Schools
Principal: Marjorie Record
Address: 750 W. 26th, Marion, IN 46953
Phone: 317-664-9051

We've all got one of those friends who seem to be able to pack more into a single lifetime than most people could in three or four: the owner of a successful small business who's getting her law degree at night while raising two children, or the surgeon who qualified for the Olympic trials in kayaking—and just had his first novel accepted for publication.

How do they do it?

That was the initial response of teachers in one of our focus groups when Anne Moudy of Marion High School began describing Marion's reallocation of time to free teachers for professional development during the school day. At Marion, she said, all teachers get an extra period every day for professional development in addition to their prep period. No minutes have been added to the school day or the teachers' contract day. No minutes have been subtracted from instructional time. It didn't cost the district a penny. And teachers from different departments were getting together and talking seriously about whole-school improvement for the first time.

Here's how they did it, according to Moudy and Assistant Principal Jerry McVicker. Marion originally had a standard high school day: six academic periods plus a 52-minute lunch period. Of that 52 minutes, teachers had a half hour for lunch plus a 22-minute lunch duty. They also had an extra 20 minutes of non-instructional time on their contracts every day.

Lunch was cut from 52 to 30 minutes, eliminating lunch duty for teachers. That 22 minutes was added to the 20 minutes of contract time to come up with an extra 45-minute period each day. Now Marion has what might be called a staggered six-period day. There are seven class periods plus a 30-minute lunch. Some students attend class from periods one through six, others from periods two through seven. (And a handful of highly motivated youngsters take seven classes.) This schedule frees about one fourth of the school's teachers for professional development during the first period and about three fourths during the last period of the day.

The primary motive behind the restructured school day was to let the entire teaching staff prepare for block scheduling, slated to begin in the 1997-98 school year. Instead of simply implementing block scheduling and letting teachers wing it, Marion decided to give teachers two years to explore this new approach, visit other schools, consider teaching strategies for longer periods, write curriculum, discuss

interdisciplinary projects, and so forth. Occasionally an outside expert is brought in; most of the time, though, staff share their knowledge and expertise with each other. Some of the sessions are also used for other professional development purposes, such as learning to use new technology.

Whatever the focus of the sessions, it's almost always the teachers who decide, not the administrators. "There has not been a single administrator-driven staff development so far this year," said Moudy in November.

One major benefit of Marion's restructured scheduled is a significant increase in interdepartmental communication. "We have people who have been in that building eight to ten years who have never had a conversation with each other until this year," Moudy said. "One of the things we have seen in this dialogue is that people are seeing school as being something more than their department and beginning to have a little understanding that if one area does something, it has an impact over here—and that the kids are the connecting part."

Although the benefits have been considerable, Moudy noted that teachers may need a break from this schedule. "Our folks are tired," she said. "Having to examine on a constant basis your professional practice is very, very tiring." Once every four years might be about right, she said.

However often the schedule is used, it is definitely worthwhile, said Assistant Principal McVicker. "Teachers appreciate the additional time. They put a lot into it and they get a lot out of it."

ONE OF THE THINGS WE HAVE SEEN IN THIS DIALOGUE IS THAT PEOPLE ARE SEEING SCHOOL AS BEING SOMETHING MORE THAN THEIR DEPARTMENT.

—ANNE MOUDY
TEACHER, MARION HIGH SCHOOL

But how can teachers find the time to engage in this kind of continuous learning when their workdays are almost completely absorbed by teaching responsibilities? High school teachers generally get one period per day (50 to 55 minutes) outside the classroom for planning time, elementary teachers 30 to 45 minutes. Considering that high school teachers generally have three or four preps per day and 150 or more students, and that elementary teachers may have even more preps, this planning time is more than absorbed by classroom responsibilities. Seldom is time scheduled to give teachers opportunities to plan or work together.

There are the summer months, of course, and many teachers use these months to take college classes or attend intensive, week-long institutes on some aspect of teaching. Valuable as these experiences may be, they are still discrete activities for individual teachers, and they place the onus on teachers to give up their own time rather than on the schools to build time into the regular school calendar.

Essentially, there are two options for increasing professional development time. One is to *add time* to the school calendar—an expensive proposition that has not yet won favor among state legislators. The other option is to *reallocate time* within the existing school calendar. Below are some suggestions for reallocating time, taken from research and from the practice of various schools in Indiana:

- **Expanded staffing:** Schools can use substitute teachers to fill in for regular teachers engaged in professional development activities. Substitutes may be drawn from the district's substitute pool. Administrators also can serve as substitutes.

  Better practices include (a) hiring full-time floating substitutes who move from class to class or school to school on a regular basis, as the Anderson Community School Corporation has done (see pages 87-88), or (b) scheduling part-time teachers into the regular school week, thus freeing full-time teachers for professional development activities. These approaches—with qualified substitutes who can provide appropriate expertise and continuity—can help ease teachers', parents', and school boards' concerns over student learning when the teacher is away from the classroom.

- **Alternative grouping:** Schools can bring students together in groups larger than a single class, thus freeing

one or more teachers. Team teaching or joint presentations may free one teacher; regular schoolwide assemblies or community service by students can free an entire faculty.

- **Alternative scheduling:** Schools can adjust the master schedule to give groups of teachers common planning time for collaborative efforts. Block scheduling in combination with teacher teams can be used to free teachers for professional development. Secondary schools can add an extra period for professional development during the school day. If teachers have lunch duty and non-instructional time in their teaching contracts, as was the case at Marion High School (see profile on pages 33-34), an extra period can be added without extending the day or reducing instructional time.

- **Accumulated time:** If granted a waiver from the IDOE, schools can accumulate release time for professional development if their calendar exceeds 105% of the required minimum number of instructional hours per year. Students may be dismissed early on as many as six different occasions for up to 2½ hours per occasion.

- **School/university partnerships:** As part of more comprehensive professional development initiatives, schools and universities can arrange for undergraduate education students to cover teachers' classrooms while the teachers participate in professional development activities with each other and faculty from the university (see the profile of Lynwood Elementary on pages 25-26). This approach can benefit not only the teachers, but the education students and university faculty as well.

These are a few of the options that imaginative administrators and school improvement teams can use, alone or in combination, to free teachers for professional development. Some options, such as common planning time or school/university partnerships, are virtually cost free. Others, such as expanded staffing, can be relatively expensive. Some of the options can be carried out without violating current state policy, district policy, or teachers' bargaining contracts. Others, such as accumulated time, may require waivers from the state, district, or union (or changes in policy or the bargaining contract).

The particular strategies a school uses will depend, of course, on its overall vision for school improvement and on constraints imposed by state law, district policies, and the bargaining agreement. Whatever those strategies turn out to be, however, it is important to bear in mind the principles of effective professional development that have been discussed in this chapter. An extra inservice day once a year will probably have little or no effect on the growth of teachers. A half-day once a week, or even once a month, together with regular time for coaching, discussion, planning, and research, may help transform an entire school into a center of continuous learning for all.

THIS CHAPTER HAS INCLUDED PROFILES OF SCHOOLS THAT EMBODY AT LEAST SOME OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THE CHAPTER CLOSES WITH AN EXAMPLE OF A STATEWIDE PROGRAM THAT FOSTERS EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A HOST OF INDIANA SCHOOLS.

• PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE •

THE CLASS PROGRAM

TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since 1990, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has funded a professional development project called CLASS (Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students). Developed by former elementary teacher Barbara Pedersen, CLASS synthesizes cooperative learning, social skills development, integrated instruction, and an enriched learning environment in an attempt to transform schools into communities of lifelong learners.

Over 200 schools have been involved with CLASS over the past five years. Participating schools receive $75 per teacher per year for three years to help cover the cost of materials and release time for ongoing training sessions.

The content of CLASS is of less interest here than its approach to professional development. In most schools where CLASS is adopted, teachers are heavily involved in the adoption decision. Thus, they have an opportunity to discuss the merits of the project, reflect on their own needs as individual teachers and as a faculty, and consider the vision of the whole school. In some cases, only a portion of the faculty ultimately decides to participate in CLASS. In other schools, CLASS is adopted schoolwide, and the entire faculty may attend training sessions together. Signs expressing the CLASS philosophy appear in the halls, cafeteria, and gym. Music and art teachers may integrate their subjects into regular teachers' themes or develop their own themes. In short, the entire school is infused with the CLASS approach.

New participants are introduced to the theory and practice of CLASS through a series of six day-long training sessions, held intermittently throughout the school's first three years of participation in the program. Between these sessions, follow-up coaching sessions are provided by a cadre of 32 coaches, each an experienced CLASS participant who continues to teach in the classroom as well as coach. There are six full-time regional trainers, also drawn from the pool of experienced CLASS teachers. Throughout the year, teachers have opportunities to witness formal demonstrations of teaching methods given by coaches and to observe experienced CLASS teachers in other schools. There are also week-long sessions during the summer. Second- and third-year CLASS teachers have opportunities for advanced training.

During the training and coaching sessions, CLASS staff members encourage participating teachers to explore the ideas they are presenting, try them in the classroom, discuss them with other teachers, and modify or even discard them where

necessary. The purpose is not to give teachers a set of ready-made practices, but to provide them with a flexible set of strategies to adapt to their own needs, becoming more thoughtful about their practice in the process.

As teachers get deeper into the project, many begin to notice areas where they need additional professional development, such as authentic assessment or the multiple-intelligences approach. Many CLASS schools make funds available for teachers to continue learning on their own. As teachers develop themes to knit the various strands of their curricula together, they recognize gaps in their own subject matter knowledge and begin doing research to fill those gaps.

Teachers also begin talking to one another more often, not just in structured discussion sessions but in the cafeteria and the teachers' lounge. One teacher said, "I actually love going to the teachers' lounge now" because teachers are talking about exciting new developments and new ideas for themes rather than about the behavior of children. Conversations are made easier by the language that CLASS participants share (the language of themes, lifeskills, lifelong guidelines, and other terms familiar to anyone who has ever been in a CLASS school).

ONE TEACHER SAID, "I ACTUALLY LOVE GOING TO THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE NOW" BECAUSE TEACHERS ARE TALKING ABOUT EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND NEW IDEAS FOR THEMES RATHER THAN ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN.

To encourage communication among teachers across schools, the CLASS staff sends out a monthly newsletter and also holds networking days for teachers from the same grade level across the state.

In 1992, the IDOE requested a study/evaluation of the first two years of the CLASS program, which was conducted by researchers at the Indiana Education Policy Center. The study focused on the implementation of the program, the effectiveness of training, and the perceived effect of CLASS on student achievement, motivation, and discipline. A number of changes were made in CLASS training and implementation strategies as a result of the evaluation.

In short, the CLASS approach embodies a number of the principles of effective professional development discussed above. Particularly where it is adopted schoolwide, CLASS:

- Is school-based;
- Involves teachers in decision making;
- Is integrated into a coherent school improvement plan that avoids fragmentation;
- Follows the theory/demonstration/practice & feedback/coaching scheme;
- Provides opportunities for classroom observation;
- Provides continuous follow-up, coaching, and support;
- Presents theory and research as something to try, assess, and adapt, rather than merely to implement;
- Prompts teachers to become reflective practitioners as they try out new approaches and do research for their themes;
- Forms a cadre of experienced CLASS teachers who coach new participants while continuing to teach in the classroom;
- Fosters collaboration within and across schools;
- Is modified based on the results of evaluation; and
- Promotes the ultimate goal of turning schools into centers of continuous learning for all.

• CHAPTER 2 •

A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT make one thing obvious:

> **The people at each school, learning and working together to improve students' performance, are crucial for effective professional development.**

The schools profiled throughout this document teach a similar lesson—effective learning, by professionals and students, depends on the initiative of a school's faculty, principal, parents, and community.

This chapter lays out one framework for enabling the school to implement the principles of effective professional development. The next chapter suggests what the various actors at the school can do once that framework is in place.

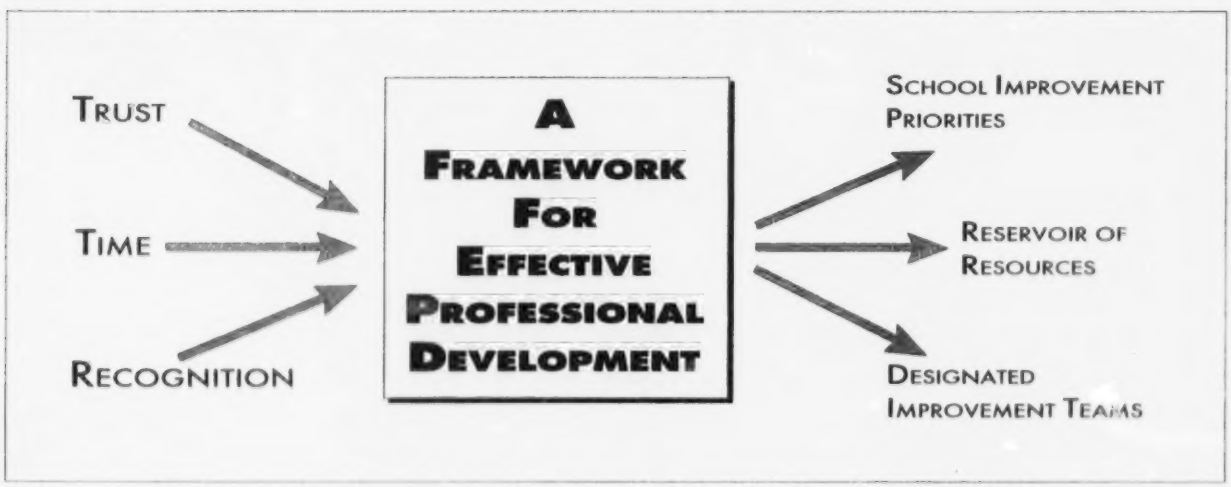
The premise of these chapters is not, however, that schools operating in pristine isolation are the only important actors in professional development. The improving school inevitably generates a demand for research, models, advice, consultation, and assistance from colleagues at other schools, educational service centers, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), and universities. Moreover, as Chapter 4 explains in some detail, central school district actors—school board members, central office administrators, and union officials—have a special role to play in authorizing, recognizing, and supporting professional development at each school. Finally, state authorities and universities have obvious responsibilities to provide for the formal preservice and graduate education not addressed in this report but that research and common sense suggest are important to the effectiveness of schools.

Nevertheless, school-based, collaborative learning is the aspect of professional development that is, paradoxically enough, most neglected and most promising for school improvement. In fact, the way that

school improvement and school-based learning are connected is the insight often overlooked in traditional ideas of professional development. Those ideas usually assume that if professional development is conducted first, school improvement will follow as a matter of course. School-based learning portrays the relationship between school improvement and professional development in precisely the opposite way:

> **By focusing on school improvement, indeed particular improvements as determined at each school, the need for learning will become apparent to the school personnel most immediately involved, and their willingness to commit themselves to the rigors of real learning will be strengthened.**

FIGURE 1



Effective professional development arises from a commitment to school improvement projects rather than a commitment to professional development itself. The teachers, for example, who have devised a way of making their school more successful in the teaching of reading are likely to have learned more than those who set out to develop themselves without a specific and collective aim for their learning.

The teachers and principals in the statewide focus groups demonstrated almost unanimous enthusiasm for the principles of effective professional development. At the same time, they expressed some concern that the conditions in their schools and

school corporations were not always fully conducive to carrying out the principles.

Among teachers' and principals' greatest concerns were the related issues of **trust, time**, and **recognition,** issues also raised in Chapter 1. The framework suggested in this chapter, which emerged from focus group members' thoughtful suggestions for responding to these concerns, is one way to address these issues. This is obviously not the only path to effective professional development. Indeed, some of the schools profiled in this document have used other approaches. Nevertheless, this framework offers one promising approach to making effective professional development possible.

TRUST
Shared Purposes, Discretion, and Meaningful Accountability

The very premise of effective professional development is potentially threatening to all parties involved in the education of a community's children, for it requires a frank admission that those engaged in an activity do not already know everything necessary to perform at optimum effectiveness. Such an admission—by school board members, administrators, teachers, or other school professionals—can and will be made only under conditions of mutual respect and trust. The trust necessary for effective professional development takes many forms—between school personnel and district authorities, between parents and teachers, between teachers and principals, and among teachers themselves. Traditional forms of professional development often assume strictly hierarchical relationships among these various constituencies, with officials in the central office determining what teachers and principals need to know and teachers and principals submitting themselves to that determination. At the same time, traditional professional development, with its specific focus on changing individual teachers' subject matter knowledge and instructional techniques, often assumes that teachers' professional responsibilities end at the walls of their individual classrooms. In the eyes of

TRUST
NEEDED FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- ✓ Is based on shared purposes for school improvement.
- ✓ Gives teachers the discretion they need to achieve those purposes.
- ✓ Allows teachers to be meaningfully accountable for improvement.

most practitioners consulted for this report, these assumptions are inconsistent with the full implementation of the principles of effective professional development.

Those principles imply a change in the relationships among school board members, central administrators, parents, principals, and teachers—changes that replace the traditional chain of command and teacher isolation with relationships of acknowledged trust and mutual responsibility. Schools need to be trusted to assess and change their approaches to student learning. Teachers need to be trusted to share their insights, knowledge, and concerns about the workings of their own schools. And they need to trust one another in the process of intelligent exploration that improvement inevitably requires.

To foster this trust, professional development should be founded upon an ongoing and participatory process of identifying and responding to concrete needs for school improvement at each school site.

School improvement priorities enhance trust among teachers, principals, and central school district actors, first, by providing community acknowledgment that the professional development to be undertaken is in fact important to the school and the district. In other words, these priorities represent **shared purposes** for professional development, purposes to which the affected parties have consented. If, for instance, improvement of students' mathematics learning has emerged as an important need at a school, the community has already recognized that meeting that need serves a valid educational concern of the school rather than just advances the educational vision or the professional interests of a select few individuals.

Second, the school improvement priorities provide a sound rationale for granting those involved in professional development the **discretion** needed to consider new approaches, to explore them intelligently, and to adapt these approaches thoughtfully to meet these shared purposes. Teachers and others can thus be freed from the traditional forms of moment-to-moment supervision in the knowledge that they are working on issues of concern to the entire community.

Finally, school improvement priorities provide a publicly recognized criterion for those engaged in professional development to evaluate their work and for them to report to others in the community on their progress. In essence, priorities provide the grounds for **meaningful accountability** in pursuing professional development.

The trust needed to implement the principles of effective professional development is not blind. It is based on these three elements of shared purposes, discretion, and meaningful accountability. Teachers, principals, and central actors trust one another to analyze, learn about, change, and evaluate their activities in the secure knowledge that they are working for common aims and that their work will be judged according to standards that they have accepted in advance. At the same time, trust does not require perfection, only a willingness to work toward and be judged according to these standards.

TIME
SUFFICIENT, FLEXIBLE, AND SUSTAINED

THE NEED FOR TEACHER TIME for effective professional development is obvious. However, parents, in particular, and other members of the community as well expect teachers to devote all their time to children. To be sure, professional development conducted in the context of school improvement does mean that teachers and principals will be doing things to meet the needs of children more effectively. Nevertheless, that time will not necessarily be spent *with* children. Therefore, the work time of teachers simply must be reorganized to make more of it available for work on the school's improvement priorities and for the professional learning that accompanies that work. And that reorganization of time must be formally recognized by the school and district as legitimate, even necessary, for the proper functioning of the school's educational process.

TIME NEEDED FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
✓ IS SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW CONCENTRATED WORK ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.
✓ IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES.
✓ IS SUSTAINED TO ALLOW LONG-TERM COMMITMENT.

Some of the necessary time can undoubtedly be provided by scheduling the time of teachers and other school professionals appropriately. But rescheduling existing time, as important as that is for enabling teachers to work together on school improvement projects, is inevitably not enough. Additional time, and therefore additional resources, should be allocated to professional development.

To make this time available, each school should place *all* of its resources for professional development into a reservoir to be used exclusively to support work on its priorities for improvement.

Such a reservoir of resources, effectively a reservoir of teacher time, is important in several different ways. First, as already noted, it represents a commitment to make **sufficient** time available for understanding the needs of the school and for developing the capacity to meet those needs.

Making schools better is steady work, especially when the social and intellectual conditions that schools face are in continual flux.

Just as important, the idea of a reservoir is especially appropriate given the many different uses of time required for effective professional development. The time provided for professional development should be **flexible** enough to meet the particular needs of an individual school's efforts at improvement. On occasion, time is best used for defining in detail the nature of students' and the school's needs. Other times, teachers will review research related to those needs, visit other schools that have succeeded in solving similar problems, confer with consultants who have appropriate expertise, plan new programs, practice new skills, or give and receive feedback on their performance. And sometimes, teachers will need to evaluate the results of their new approaches and report on those results.

Finally, a reservoir of teacher time represents a **sustained** commitment to the tasks of school improvement and professional development. Making schools better is steady work, especially when the social and intellectual conditions that schools face are in continual flux. Last decade's successful science program will soon be hopelessly outmoded in part because science has changed but equally because students have changed as well.

RECOGNITION
Authorization, Support, and Acknowledgment

In the focus groups, teachers and principals consistently expressed their willingness to spend their time in the ways that effective professional development requires. What they worry about, however, is whether their communities are in fact willing to allow them to change what they do and to give them credit for their efforts to do so.

The public clamor for change, combined with the perceived expectations that teachers will spend their time in the same old ways, produces confusion among teachers. To help end this confusion, schools and districts need to redefine their expectations of teachers to recognize their efforts at school improvement and professional development.

To provide this recognition, each school should designate teachers and other relevant individuals to work in teams formally charged with achieving the school's improvement priorities.

Everything that teachers do in schools except for their work in the classroom with children is often viewed by the public and even by teachers themselves as, at worst, an evasion of their real duties and, at best, a necessary evil. But school improvement and effective professional development go to the very heart of teachers' responsibilities—the enhancement of student learning. Because of current public expectations, however, schools and districts must **authorize** teachers to spend their time and energies to meet these fundamental responsibilities, especially because they must spend some time out of the regular classroom to do so effectively. The formal designation of school teams charged publicly with these tasks gives the members of the teams the authority to improve the entire school and not just their own classrooms.

RECOGNITION NEEDED FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- ✓ AUTHORIZES TEACHERS TO SPEND THEIR TIME ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.
- ✓ IS SUPPORTED BY FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE.
- ✓ ACKNOWLEDGES THE ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF TEACHERS.

But the recognition that teachers need for work on school improvement and school-based professional development goes beyond words and expectations to real action by the school community. By analogy, as important as high teacher expectations are for improved student learning, those expectations will inevitably be frustrated unless teachers also provide the opportunities and resources children need for learning. Teacher learning is no different; authorization must be accompanied by **support** for teachers to see that schools take the expectations for school improvement seriously. The reservoir of resources described above is one critical element of support. They must also be helped to deploy those resources effectively.

Finally, it is important to **acknowledge** the work of the school improvement teams. Teachers find very early in their careers that as a rule the rewards of teaching are implicit and uncertain—a more

engaging school environment, for example, or the long-term enhancement of students' lives. The rewards of school improvement will probably be substantially of this kind. These subtle rewards will eventually be an important source of continuing motivation for those engaged in the hard work of school improvement. But at the beginning especially, these rewards may be entirely obscured in the day-to-day and often agonizingly difficult business of rethinking and reformulating the school's approach to student learning. As a result, the school and district should acknowledge explicitly the efforts and progress of school improvement teams.

Our teachers are really excited. They've been very willing to share. I think CLASS has pulled the staff together in a way that changing curriculum or any other kind of change may not have done.

—Frances Fitzgerald
Principal, Beardsley Elementary School

• Principles in Practice •

BEARDSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A CLASS School

Corporation: Elkhart Community Schools
Principal: Frances Fitzgerald
Address: 1027 McPherson Street, Elkhart, IN 46514
Phone: 219-262-5575

As many principals and teachers around the state can attest, it's hard to hear Barbara Pedersen talk about the CLASS program without getting excited. Pedersen, a former teacher from Central Elementary in Lebanon and now the director of CLASS (Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students), speaks with such enthusiasm and brings such a wealth of practical experience to her words that over 200 schools across Indiana have participated in the program.

One of those schools is Beardsley Elementary in Elkhart. Beardsley principal Frances Fitzgerald heard Pedersen speak about CLASS at a conference in the spring of 1992. Her curiosity piqued, Fitzgerald visited Central Elementary, one of the original CLASS schools and also site of the CLASS office. She then brought up CLASS at a full-staff meeting. "The teachers were wanting change," she said, "and CLASS had a lot of components we were looking for. It was also placed on a volunteer basis. If you chose not to get involved in the training, that was all right."

Eight of Beardsley's 22 teachers agreed to participate in CLASS the first year, taking the week-long summer session that was one of the training options at that time. Fitzgerald attended that session with her teachers and also attended the workshop for principals.

Over the next three years, more and more teachers got involved, and by the 1995-96 school year, all but five Beardsley teachers had gone through training. Even those five were using some aspects of the CLASS approach in their classrooms. "Also," said Fitzgerald, "in the last four years we have put the life goals and the lifelong guidelines into our discipline policy. So everyone is required to participate in that part of CLASS."

In fact, Beardsley got so involved with CLASS that it became a training site for the program, that is, a place where teachers from new CLASS schools come to receive their training and observe CLASS in action. And one of Beardsley's teachers, Sue Price, became a CLASS coach in 1994. When her two year stint as coach ends after the 1995-96 school year, she will move back into the classroom at Beardsley and become a model CLASS teacher.

In addition to the standard CLASS training—the workshops, the follow-up coaching, the opportunities to observe—Fitzgerald holds monthly after-school meetings with CLASS teachers. These sessions are used to share new ideas and to keep spirits high. "You think

BEARDSLEY TEACHERS HAVE UNDERTAKEN AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT THAT IS EXAMINING WHETHER THE LIFE GOALS AND THE LIFELONG GUIDELINES ARE IMPROVING STUDENT CONDUCT.

many times as a teacher that you're the only one who's struggling," said Fitzgerald. "Well, those meetings became a place where teachers could vent any kind of frustration that they were having. They could work together to support each other and say, 'You know, I had the same problem, and I backed off and looked at it,' or 'You're trying to do too much. Take one step at a time.'"

This kind of support is especially important at a school like Beardsley, an inner city school with a fairly high staff turnover rate. "If you give teachers something and don't have them bond together as new teachers come on board, then everybody kind of feels like they're just out there with no support," said Fitzgerald. "The meetings have really kept the group cohesive."

The benefits of the meetings are not restricted to Beardsley teachers. "As teachers from other schools came on board, we invited them to come over here and share," she said. "We've also done training with parents so they know where we're coming from."

The bottom line, of course, is not simply the effect of CLASS on teachers and parents, but on students. To assess that effect, three Beardsley teachers have undertaken an action research project —one of several in the Elkhart district—that is examining whether the life goals and the lifelong guidelines are improving student conduct. "We took a survey of 5th and 6th grade teachers," explained Fitzgerald, "and we are working with that right now to see if having those goals and guidelines in the classroom has made a difference in the behavior of the child." The results will be reported to the staff and will also be published by the district along with all the other action research projects.

Even before the results are in, however, Fitzgerald has noticed significant differences in the school. "Our teachers are really excited," she said. "They've been very willing to share. I think CLASS has pulled the staff together in a way that changing curriculum or any other kind of change may not have done. And I see a lot of positive things happening for children, for families. The whole environment of Beardsley School has taken on a new look."

• CHAPTER 3 •

AN ACTION PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TRUST, TIME, AND RECOGNITION ARE THE KEY CONCERNS of teachers and principals who wish to establish a system of effective professional development in Indiana schools. Several elements of such a system provide a framework for meeting these concerns.

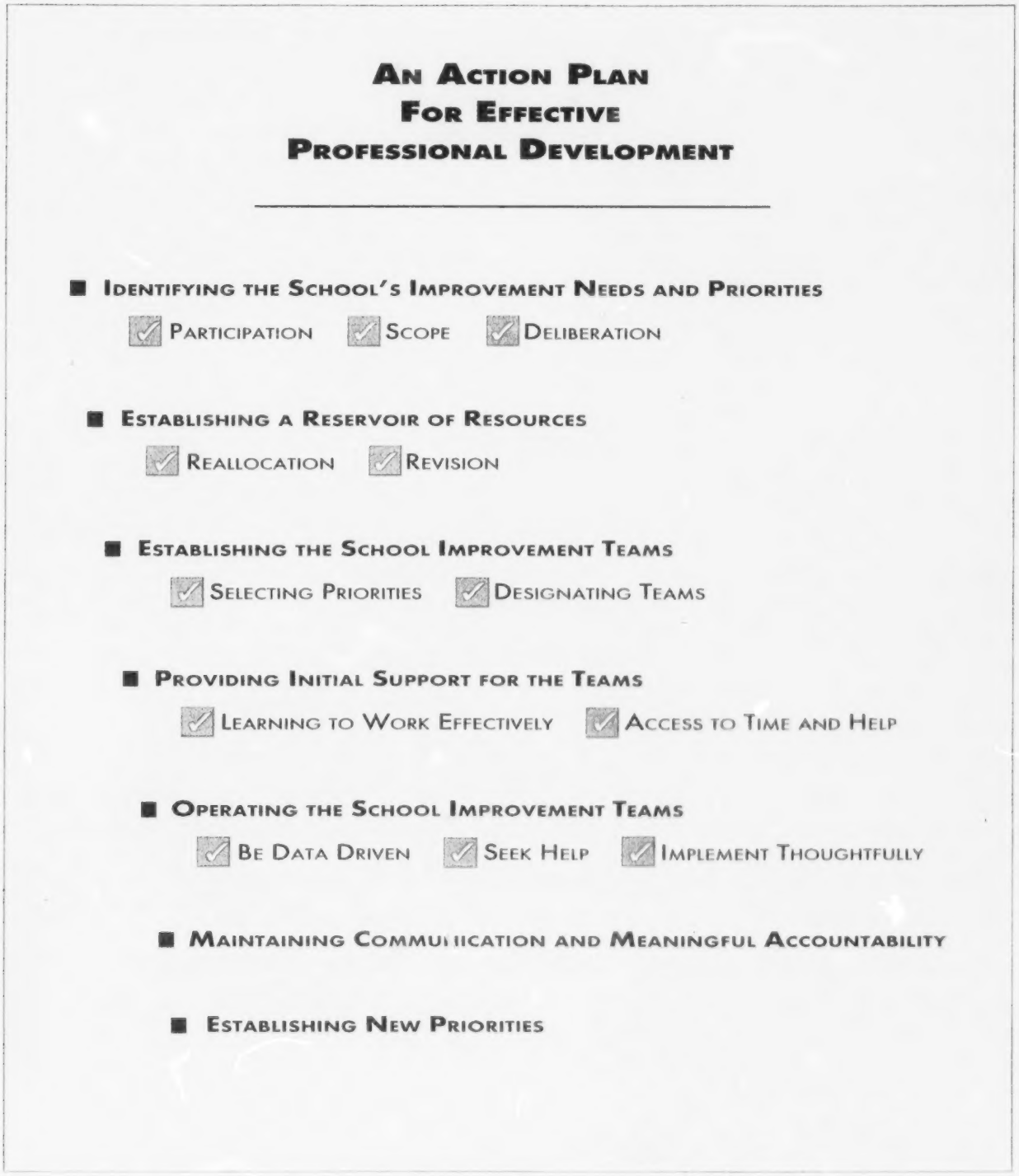
Through a participatory process for identifying improvement priorities, school professionals can be granted the community's trust to improve their schools, based on an understanding of what needs to be improved and how schools can be held meaningfully accountable to the public for making those improvements. By having a reservoir of resources at each school, professionals can be allowed the time to make improvements thoughtfully, including the time they need to learn what and how to improve. And through formal designation of school improvement teams, professionals can be recognized for what they do to improve the school as well as for performing their current classroom duties.

This chapter considers in more detail a process for putting these elements in place. That process is outlined in Figure 2, on the next page.

Each section below focuses on one phase of this process, suggesting general guidelines and more concrete advice for accomplishing that phase. This advice is based on what was learned in the focus groups of teachers and principals as well as on the state policies under which Indiana schools operate.

Unique circumstances, choices to pursue other approaches to effective professional development, and work already under way at particular schools may make some of this advice inapplicable or unfeasible. These sections, therefore, are intended only as one alternative for the creative talents of the teachers and principals who undertake effective professional development in the interests of school improvement.

FIGURE 2


AN ACTION PLAN
FOR EFFECTIVE
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IDENTIFYING THE SCHOOL'S IMPROVEMENT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES
PARTICIPATION
SCOPE
DELIBERATION
ESTABLISHING A RESERVOIR OF RESOURCES
REALLOCATION
REVISION
ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS
SELECTING PRIORITIES
DESIGNATING TEAMS
PROVIDING INITIAL SUPPORT FOR THE TEAMS
LEARNING TO WORK EFFECTIVELY
ACCESS TO TIME AND HELP
OPERATING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS
BE DATA DRIVEN
SEEK HELP
IMPLEMENT THOUGHTFULLY
MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION AND MEANINGFUL ACCOUNTABILITY
ESTABLISHING NEW PRIORITIES

Identifying the School's Improvement Needs and Priorities

All Indiana schools are required to develop plans for school improvement and professional development as part of Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA). It would be foolish to duplicate or ignore these plans in the process of redesigning schools for effective professional development. Often, however, PBA plans are treated as little more than an exercise in compliance with state rules, leading to documents that gather dust between five-year accreditation periods. The crucial role that improvement priorities play in establishing an environment of trust for effective professional development implies that much more is at stake than simple compliance with the letter of the law. It requires, rather, a sense of commitment to the spirit of school improvement planning, something that nearly 10 years of experience with PBA shows cannot be mandated. School-based professional development can use PBA plans if they are more participatory, wider in scope, and more deliberative than is frequently the case.

A school's priorities for improvement should:
✓ Be identified by teachers and parents at the school.
✓ Be endorsed by parents, teachers, administrators, the school board, and union officials.
✓ Reflect the most important concerns of each school's community.
✓ Reflect hard evidence about the school and its students.

Participation

> **Priorities for improvement at each school should be, first, developed through a process that includes teachers, parents, and staff at the school and, second, formally endorsed by the school faculty, parents, union officials, central office administrators, and school board members.**

Unless the process for establishing school improvement priorities includes (a) active involvement of those closest to the action and (b) formal approval by all parties, it cannot foster the trust necessary for effective professional development. If, for example, the teachers at the school do not collectively and consciously accept those priorities, they are less likely to serve on school improvement teams, agree to the use of resources for that purpose, or

accept the teams' recommendations. If parents at the school are not involved in and informed about those priorities, they are less likely to accept the time that their children's teachers must spend outside the classroom to work on the school improvement teams. Similarly, if school board members are not informed about the priorities and their rationale or about the accomplishments of the school improvement teams, they are less likely to recognize teachers for their work on the teams or to revise the district budget to permit a reservoir of professional development resources at each school.

Q & A

Q: *Won't this participatory process at each school consume a lot of time, energy, and effort of most if not all of the school's professionals? How can they fit this activity into their schedules?*

The reservoir of resources for professional development at each school should be used to pay these professionals for time spent out of school or to release them during school hours to accomplish the research, discussion, and deliberation needed. Spending this money should not be seen as simply a matter of expedience, to give teachers and others an incentive to work on priority identification. Rather, the identification of priorities is an important form of professional development in itself—in which professionals at the school learn about their students and communities, the results of the school's instructional program, and the adequacy of those results.

Q: *Are improvement priorities just a matter of people's opinions about the school?*

Not at all. Seeing priority identification as part of professional development is likely to make it appropriately data driven, not simply a matter of shared hunches and prejudices about what is right and wrong at the school. Teachers who see priority identification as a learning experience are likely to seek evidence for their conclusions, rather than simply relying on hearsay and suspicion. Those involved in priority identification should obtain relevant evidence as their work proceeds, and school and district administrators should facilitate their efforts. Often this evidence can be gathered from existing school and district records, but special efforts to arrange the evidence in *(Continued on page 57.)*

TEACHERS COME IN ON A REGULAR BASIS AND ASK EACH OTHER WHAT ARTICLES AND BOOKS THEY'VE BEEN READING.

—DEBBIE CAINCROSS
PRINCIPAL, GOSPORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE •

GOSPORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BECOMING THEIR OWN EXPERTS

Corporation: Spencer-Owen Community Schools
Principal: Debbie Caincross
Address: P.O. Box 159, Gosport, IN 47433
Phone: 812-879-4694

As at most schools, teachers at Gosport Elementary carry on their share of conversations about problem students and social lives. But they also have something else on their minds: educational innovation. "Teachers come in on a regular basis," said Gosport principal Debbie Caincross, "and ask each other what articles and books they've been reading."

For the past eight years, Gosport has been engaged in a process of continuous school improvement, and teacher growth, research, and collaboration have been an integral part of that process. It all started shortly after Irene Brock took over as principal in 1987. Brock, who had taught in a nontraditional classroom earlier in her career, was looking for some new educational ideas. "Intuitively I had a sense that what was done traditionally didn't really make a lot of sense," she said. But she wasn't exactly sure where she wanted to take the school.

After listening for several months to teachers talk informally around the lunch table about new ideas for teaching and learning, she decided it was time to get serious about school restructuring. She and the staff asked Lee Wiggam, the technology coordinator for Spencer-Owen Community Schools, to be their outside facilitator, and the heretofore casual conversations became more structured, more serious, and more visionary. "Then professional development in various forms began to increase, and people just wanted to talk and share more," said Brock.

Along the way, everyone's attitude toward school improvement began to change. "Previously," she said, "school improvement just meant doing something improved in your own classroom. But when questions emerge about what school is and what it could be, you have to talk to one another. You can't just go in your own room and do your own thing exclusively anymore."

Definitions of professional development changed as well. "The definition that they finally came to give professional development was much different than it was in the beginning," explained Brock. "The thing that was so different was when they discovered that they knew more about what they were talking about than the 'experts' did. They began to see that they needed to become their own experts. That was just a revelation."

Over a period of three years, Gosport transformed itself from a traditional elementary school, where time was constant and learning varied from child to child, into a restructured school,

where (in theory at least) learning is constant and time is the variable. Among the many innovative approaches used at Gosport are multi-age grouping, integrated curricula, and various forms of authentic assessment. Gosport became a Re:Learning pilot site in 1992 and an Indiana 2000 school during the 1992-93 school year, one of the first schools in Indiana to receive that designation.

In all too many cases, when educational leaders depart, many of the changes initiated under their tenure soon disappear as well. But the habits of collaboration, inquiry, and continuous learning were so deeply ingrained at Gosport that when Brock left after the 1992-93 school year, school improvement and professional development continued apace under new principal Debbie Caincross:

- The entire staff meets every other week to discuss educational issues—a rarity in the world of school staff meetings.
- Smaller groups of teachers, or inquiry groups, also meet frequently to ask and answer specific questions, often bringing their classes together so they can collaborate on educational change in practice as well as in theory.

TEACHERS BEGAN TO SEE THAT THEY NEEDED TO BECOME THEIR OWN EXPERTS. THAT WAS JUST A REVELATION.

—IRENE BROCK
FORMER PRINCIPAL, GOSPORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Gosport is one of five founding members of the Indiana Center for Collaborative Education. As such, teachers, parents, students, and administrators from the school are undergoing a period of intense self-scrutiny during which they have the opportunity to visit other schools as well. (See the profile of Cold Spring Elementary, on pages 17-18, for a more detailed description of the Indiana Center for Collaborative Education.)

Gosport teachers also participate in professional development workshops around the country, but sometimes return frustrated with the attitudes of some of the other teachers they meet, according to Caincross: "Some teachers want THE ANSWER, some want lots of handouts, others are just forced to come." What they need to realize, she said, is that school improvement is not some easy-to-follow recipe, but a never-ending process.

One that will continue this week and the next and the next . . .

relevant ways or even to conduct new data gathering activities may be required. This evidence is important not only at this stage to make accurate judgments about the improvement needs of the school but also later as the school improvement teams seek ways of meeting the needs identified.

Q: *How should parents be involved in this process?*

It is crucial for some parents to be involved fully in the process of investigating and recommending improvement priorities. First, because of their understanding of the community, parents are invaluable sources of information to be considered in formulating the school's priorities. Second, involving some parents in the nitty gritty of priority identification will give the priorities that emerge greater credibility in the eyes of other parents. This does not mean that the larger community of parents should be neglected in the process, however. Indeed, the final versions of the recommended priorities must be shared with all parents for their reaction, input, and endorsement through information sent to them, special hearings at the school, or regular PTA meetings.

Q: *What about others?*

In addition to parent groups, it is particularly important that the entire school faculty have a chance in formal meetings called for that purpose, first, to review the recommended priorities and the evidence for them and, second, to modify and approve those priorities. After all, the teachers at the school will have the task of developing strategies to address those priorities. In this light, they must have the chance to accept the priorities as their own. A total consensus on the priorities is, of course, not feasible, but during the faculty endorsement process, teachers must have the chance to understand the reasons for the choices their colleagues and their students' parents have made.

THE ROLE OF CENTRAL ACTORS IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IS TO ENSURE THAT SCHOOL EFFORTS ARE THOUGHTFUL AND HONEST AND TO RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT THEM WHEN THEY ARE.

School board members, union officials, and central administrators must have a similar opportunity for input and endorsement. This step should not be represented or conducted in an adversarial manner. Its purpose is above all to keep these central actors informed about the serious thought that has taken place at each school and the hard work of improvement on which the school is embarking. Again, the first principle of effective professional development is that it is school based.

Therefore, the role of central actors is not to second-guess thoughtful and honest efforts by the schools to identify their priorities; rather it is to ensure that those efforts have been thoughtful and honest and to recognize and support them when they are.

Scope

The process for identifying school improvement priorities should be wide-ranging enough to ascertain the most salient needs of the school, whether or not they implicate PBA standards.

Inevitably, PBA and the school plans developed for it focus on the performance criteria the state has identified as most important to the state and most applicable to all schools—legal requirements, attendance rates, ISTEP scores, and graduation rates. Obviously, these criteria do not capture anything like all of the issues of concern to local teachers, parents, and community members, nor were they intended to. These local constituencies also deeply care about students' performance in the full range of subjects in the school curriculum, students' attitudes toward learning, the character that children develop, the security and humaneness of the school environment, the success of students when they complete school, and a great deal more. Too narrow a focus in identifying priorities means inevitably that some of teachers' and parents' greatest concerns will be omitted from consideration, an omission that can undermine confidence in the resulting priorities and trust that school improvement teams are working on the school's most important shared purposes.

Too narrow a focus in identifying priorities can undermine trust in school improvement teams.

Q & A

Q: *How can a school organize this process?*

A steering committee of teachers, other professionals, and parents at the school might be designated to manage the priority identification process. This process requires focused time and attention; it is not something that the principal or other school administrators can reasonably be expected to manage alone in addition to their many other responsibilities, although it is important for the principal to keep in regular contact with the committee. In fact, the stimulus

and support for this committee is an important aspect of the leadership that the principal provides for the entire school improvement and professional development process. Moreover, this committee allows an obvious opportunity to involve some teachers and parents deeply in the priority identification process from the very beginning. Since work on this committee is so demanding and time consuming, resources from the school's reservoir should be used to free or compensate the time of the involved teachers. Otherwise, those teachers may not be able to devote the energy that the steering committee will require. This committee can be constituted in a variety of ways—the use of an existing school council, election by various constituent groups, or designation by the principal. The crucial consideration here is that the members of the committee have a reputation for good judgment and fairness that will command the respect of the school community.

THOSE IN CHARGE OF IDENTIFYING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES SHOULD HAVE A REPUTATION FOR GOOD JUDGMENT AND FAIRNESS THAT WILL COMMAND THE RESPECT OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

Q: *How can the steering committee be sure that it has captured all of the school community's most important concerns?*

First, the steering committee might develop a framework for priority identification designed initially to be comprehensive. That framework might be constructed from many different perspectives—the outcomes of schooling (intellectual, social, vocational, etc.), the learning needs of children (problem solving, learning to learn, cooperation, etc.), the arenas of school activities (the curriculum, discipline, extracurricular activities, etc.), the responsibilities that students will have as adults (family member, citizen, worker, etc.), state proficiencies, and so on. The only real requirements of this framework are that it be credible in the local school community and that it be designed to capture the range of potential concerns.

Next, the steering committee might use that framework to survey the initial concerns of the school community. This survey can be conducted in several different ways, depending on the realities of the school community—its size, cohesiveness, accessibility, and so on. In some communities or neighborhoods, needs identification meetings at which attendees are given the chance orally or in writing to express their concerns might be sufficient. In others, a paper survey might be most effective. Sometimes, several different strategies will be needed. Here, the only real issue is that the method of survey be designed to reach all those who have concerns.

Deliberation

The school's final priorities should be developed on the basis of relevant evidence and thoughtful deliberation on the meaning and relevance of that evidence.

As already noted, the priority identification process is itself an important form of professional learning for teachers and others at the school. Without evidence, this learning will be incomplete. And the priority identification process will be inadequate in at least two additional ways. First, opinion alone is a shaky foundation for the trust that school-based professional development requires. Opinions are inevitably divided on important issues such as what children should accomplish in schools. Evidence to back opinions provides those with opposing beliefs an understanding of why their colleagues or why other parents and community members have reached their conclusions. This understanding at the very least promotes acceptance of school improvement and professional development efforts that are to achieve the priorities; at best, it may even promote active cooperation in those efforts. Second, evidence for school improvement priorities collected at the beginning of the process provides guidance for evaluation by suggesting criteria against which the teams may judge the success of their efforts.

Evidence to back opinions promotes acceptance of school improvement and professional development efforts.

Q & A

Q: *Who should gather and use the needed evidence?*

Gathering evidence may be a task that the steering committee can accomplish entirely on its own. But if the potential needs and the relevant evidence to assess them are complex, the committee may wish to ask the help of others in the school or district, either individually or in the form of subcommittees. Such a strategy not only gives the steering committee access to needed expertise but also broadens the base of the priority identification process.

However it chooses to proceed, the steering committee will need to meet to deliberate about the final recommendations to be made to the various school constituencies so that they can develop the schoolwide perspective that those recommendations are to reflect. This deep understanding of the recommendations will be necessary

for the committee's final task—the presentation, explanation, and justification of the recommended priorities to teachers, parents, and central actors for discussion, debate, modification, and acceptance.

Establishing a Reservoir Of Resources

As may be obvious, establishing a reservoir of resources for professional development should occur simultaneously with the process of priority identification. After all, those resources will be needed to support priority identification, notably to release the time of the teachers involved. As a result, preparation for this reservoir of resources is an urgent task from the very beginning, especially for the school principal. Along with establishing the process for identifying school improvement priorities, it is at the heart of critical and supportive leadership.

To a large extent, funding decisions fall outside the authority of individual schools. Thus, the discussion of most budgetary issues will be postponed until Chapter 4, where the role of central school district actors in enabling effective professional development is considered. Nevertheless, schools can request central actors to consider changes in district budgets to support the reservoir of resources. And they can reallocate, revise, and attempt to expand the funding that they do currently control.

A school's reservoir of resources for professional development should:

- ✓ Reallocate current school professional development funding to priority identification and work on meeting the priorities.
- ✓ Employ appropriate federal and state categorical funding available to the school.
- ✓ Utilize funding from less effective activities in the current school budget.
- ✓ Include external grants when appropriate.

Budget Reallocation

The first step in creating a reservoir of resources for professional development is for schools to identify funds for professional development in the current school budget and reallocate all that possibly can be to the school reservoirs.

Many schools, perhaps most, have individual school budgets that include funding for teacher inservice. Much of this funding, despite

PBA professional development plans, is currently spent on activities that are generally considered ineffective for school improvement—short-term workshops with little or no follow-up, individually requested teacher attendance at out-of-school meetings, and so on. Even though these funds are likely to be insufficient to support the full range of priority identification and school improvement activities, they might permit schools to start that process.

Q & A

Q: *Won't there be a lot of resistance to this reallocation?*

These funds often represent one of the only perquisites enjoyed by teachers, and their reallocation may, therefore, be controversial. Yet, according to the testimony of focus group participants, teachers often do not highly value the opportunities that these funds secure. Also, teachers rarely feel in control of these funds. These findings suggest that the reallocation of school funds to support activities that prove to be of real value in enhancing the effectiveness of schools may not be as controversial as it initially seems.

Q: *What can be done if the school does not have a local budget for professional development?*

One real possibility for reallocation at the school level may lie with federal and state categorical funds. For example, Title I is now placing even greater emphasis on the use of professional development to enhance the learning of economically disadvantaged children. Other possibilities include funds currently allocated to the school for at-risk programs, ISTEP remediation, and even special education. Because administrators of these programs are familiar with the research that connects the principles of effective professional development to improved student performance, well-designed professional development is more likely than ever to meet the state and federal requirements.

THE REALLOCATION OF SCHOOL FUNDS TO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES OF REAL VALUE IN ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOLS MAY NOT BE AS CONTROVERSIAL AS IT INITIALLY SEEMS.

Budget Revision

Principals and teachers at each school should consider amending the current school budget and searching for outside funding for the professional development reservoirs.

The real work of budget revision occurs at the district level, which is discussed in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, there are funds in individual school budgets that might advance the cause of school improvement and school-based professional development. At the very least, individual schools might consider whether some funds might be moved out of current budget categories and into the school reservoirs. On careful examination, budget revision may promote student learning more effectively than current patterns of expenditure. And schools can seek additional funds to supplement their current budgets.

Q & A

Q: *How should a school decide whether to revise its budget?*

The question that principals and teachers should ask as they consider revising the school budget is whether supporting the reservoirs is more likely to improve their work and learning than traditional uses of school funds. Once school professionals have some experience with effective professional development paid for through budget reallocation, they will probably come to see the reservoirs as a high priority for the school budget.

Q: *What if the school has too little in its budget to make revision worthwhile?*

The real difficulty in revising school budgets will probably not be the motivation of school personnel but the simple shortage of funds. Those in schools with individual budgets know, for example, that the demands for classroom and library instructional materials and supplies inevitably exceeds the capacity of those budgets. Therefore, the tradeoffs between various school-budget expenditures are often excruciatingly difficult. Nevertheless, principals and teachers should consider whether those demands can be curtailed or funded in other ways in the interests of supporting

the professional development teams. And they should work with district administrators to secure the flexibility to reshape their budgets to support school improvement projects.

One way of easing the shortage of school-level funding, at least in the short run, is for teachers and principals to apply for external support for their school-based professional development activities. In fact, IDOE administers some federal funding for professional development—Eisenhower and Educate Indiana grants, for example—and has begun to use the principles of effective professional development as criteria in selecting the proposals it will support. In addition, several state programs—such as the various technology initiatives, Re:Learning, CLASS, and the Indiana School Academic Improvement Program (formerly Indiana 2000)—offer assistance that can be used to support professional development. Obviously, a range of other philanthropic and government support may also be applicable to schools' improvement efforts. Schools should consider pursuing externally funded opportunities to help initiate and maintain their school improvement and school-based professional development projects. One activity of the school improvement teams may be to locate and apply for this support when it is found relevant to the school's priorities. These priorities make it possible to coordinate several of these funding sources under one plan.

CREDIBLE EVALUATIONS OF SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CAN ENCOURAGE THE DISTRICT TO PROVIDE MORE FUNDING.

Q: *What can a school do to encourage the school district to make more funding available for school-based professional development?*

Evidence of the effect of professional development on school improvement will encourage districts to change the budget. The role of teachers and principals in providing this evidence is to conduct credible evaluations of the progress of school improvement/professional development projects at their schools and to present those results to school boards, central administrators, and union officials.

(Continued on page 67.)

My theory is that staff development for teachers is a part of their job.

—Marcia Capuano
Principal, Harshman Middle School

• Principles in Practice •

HARSHMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Working Their Way Out of a Hole Through Professional Development

Corporation: Indianapolis Public Schools
Principal: Marcia Capuano
Address: 1501 E. 10th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46201
Phone: 317-226-4101

In 1990, Harshman Middle School was "in dire need of repair," in the words of principal Marcia Capuano. Its attendance rate was 79% and its ISTEP scores were among the lowest, if not the lowest, in the state.

By 1994-95, Harshman had an attendance rate of 93%. Its ISTEP total battery had risen from 38 to 51. Its math t-scores had jumped from 16 to 39 and its language t-scores from 7 to 35. Although these numbers were still below statewide averages, the improvement was nothing short of amazing.

And Capuano attributes this improvement in large part to professional development. "We just had a lot of things that needed to be done," said Capuano. "One of the most critical things was to retool teachers so that they could do the best job of meeting the needs of the students." The top priority: reading instruction! "One of the major things we identified as we assessed the school was that kids couldn't read. But the other thing was that our teachers at the secondary level did not come from college with a large background in teaching reading. So we've done a tremendous amount on reading and writing strategies, and we do it across the curriculum. They can't be reading teachers, but they have to be teachers of reading."

Over the years, Harshman teachers also have focused on a number of other areas, among them study skills, classroom management skills, learning styles, integrated thematic instruction, cooperative learning, and student assistance programs. Professional development in these areas has taken a number of forms. In some cases, selected teachers attended workshops and then brought what they learned back to fellow staff members. "If it was something directly related to language arts teachers, then it was done in the language arts department, or if it was directly related to all our staff then it was done at faculty meetings," said Capuano.

Two Harshman teachers were involved in the Middle Grades Writing Network and three others in the Middle Grades Reading Network. Two of the school's teams (a common middle school feature whereby groups of six or so teachers teach the same 140-150 students and share planning time) participated in Project Insight, a constructivist project with technology sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Indiana Department of Education. Every summer

there is a two-day staff retreat, usually the week before school starts, that focuses on professional development and team building.

Harshman teachers also benefitted from what was known as the IPS staff development cadre. "A team of 10-12 teachers would come out to the building and do very intensive staff development with the teachers in the classroom with the students so that they were actually applying what they were learning in the setting in which they would be doing it," Capuano explained. The IPS cadre was funded by the Lilly Endowment. "Unfortunately," she said, "when the funding ran out so did the cadre."

SUPPORTING TEACHERS INSIDE THE BUILDING AS THEY TAKE RISKS TO MAKE CHANGES IN THEIR TEACHING STRATEGIES OR IN THEIR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IS CRITICAL.

—MARCIA CAPUANO

In addition to the formal workshops and programs, there are also many informal professional development opportunities at Harshman. Common planning times are often used for collaboration among team members. "As teachers understand that in order to support the needs of adolescents there has to be a lot of good communication, they use that time to develop activities and to discuss the academic achievement, the remediation needs, and the enrichment needs of the kids," Capuano said. Also, faculty meetings and committees usually involve some type of professional development. And it is crucial, she added, to help teachers follow through on what they are learning: "Staff development isn't watching a one-shot deal. It's ongoing. So supporting teachers inside the building as they take risks to make changes in their teaching strategies or in their classroom management is critical."

"My theory," Capuano continued, "is that staff development for teachers is a part of their job. It *is* part of their job. There's a massive amount of change going on in education, and I don't know how educators can keep up-to-date anymore unless they are continually refining and retooling."

Establishing the School Improvement Teams

Once improvement priorities have been established for the school, the principal and faculty will need to organize themselves to tackle those priorities. One reason why school improvement plans languish is that often no one in particular is assigned to carry them out. Formal designation of particular teachers and other relevant personnel at the school to teams charged with developing and implementing such plans can solve this problem. In designating the teams, the school and district acknowledge the legitimacy of their work and create an expectation that its results will have a place in the future functioning of the school. Just as important, formal constitution implies that schools must make a definite decision about which priorities are to receive attention and who is to work on them.

In designating school improvement teams, the school should:

- ✓ Focus on a school's one or two highest priorities.
- ✓ Initially designate a small cadre of the most qualified and involved professionals at the school to each team.
- ✓ Expect teams eventually to provide learning opportunities to other professionals at the school.

Focusing Resources in Selecting Priorities for Action

In establishing the school improvement teams, schools should focus on a few top priorities, perhaps just one or two, that they realistically have the resources to support.

The priority identification process already described usually generates a long list of needs. By prioritizing those needs, however, the school community indicates which particular needs deserve immediate attention. The obvious temptation is to work on everything important all at once. However, the principal and teachers at the school must be practical about the school's capacity to support meaningful change. Because the reservoir of resources at any school is inevitably limited, the school should take to heart Ted Sizer's basic principle that less is more. Distributing limited resources to every worthy school improvement endeavor may lead to frustration and burnout. Thus, the school will be better off choosing one or two improvement priorities and appointing for each chosen priority a team with the wherewithal to succeed, rather

than having a multitude of teams that will have to spend their time hunting for and discouraged about resources.

Q & A

Q: *Who should make the decision about which priorities should be acted on?*

The need to focus school improvement in this way requires that the selection of the action priorities be a public decision at each school. The school faculty and parents in particular need to be involved in making this decision so that the reasons for the decision are out in the open. The trust needed for school-based professional development to succeed demands this openness. Again, not everyone will necessarily agree with this decision, but an open debate and a public commitment will promote broad and publicly articulated ownership in the decision and cooperation.

Focusing Resources In Designating the Teams

Schools should designate the members of the improvement teams on the basis of their qualifications for the task at hand—their motivation, expertise, and stake in the priority that they are to address.

A definite focus for school improvement and school-based professional development is crucial for success, but it also generates a need to limit participation in the teams themselves, at least at the beginning. Just as attempting to address too many priorities at once can dissipate resources, so too can attempting to involve everyone in the entire school in the initial research and exploration that school improvement requires. The idea here is that the initial teams should be of a size and constitution to optimize their chances for success.

Q & A

Q: *Who are the most likely candidates for the improvement teams?*

The initial improvement team should be designated from among those individual teachers whose backgrounds, interests, or assignments suggest that they can make a contribution to the work of the team. As the priority identification process takes place, it is likely that individual members of the school faculty will demonstrate particular commitment to and knowledge of the action priorities that emerge. At the same time, the specific priorities selected may have special relevance to particular members of the school's staff. If, for example, the inclusion of children with disabilities is chosen as an action priority, at least some of the school's special education teachers are likely to be directly affected by the improvement team's work.

Q: *Should anyone besides school professionals work on or with the teams?*

Schools should seriously consider involving parents and other community members in the work of the teams, either as regular team members or as participants on particular occasions, such as visits to other schools. These individuals often possess skills and knowledge that apply directly to the teams' charge. They also can be ambassadors for the teams' work to other members of the community.

Q: *Doesn't this team-based and focused approach to professional development contradict the idea that all teachers at the school deserve professional development opportunities?*

Definitely not. All school personnel will benefit from the work of the teams in one way or another. School improvement is a continuous process that will provide opportunities for other teachers to become directly involved in the work of improvement as old teams complete their projects and new teams are established to address additional improvement priorities.

SCHOOLS SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER INVOLVING PARENTS AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS.

Also, teams are addressing priorities that the entire school community has chosen as most important; thus, their success is to the collective benefit of the entire school staff, whether or not others are directly involved in the particular learning activities that the team conducts. For instance, adopting new measures for the safety of students in the school indirectly improves the learning environment of every classroom,

even for teachers who are not directly involved in the research into the measures adopted for that purpose.

Many teachers beyond the membership of the original improvement team may also become involved later in training, practice, coaching, and other follow-up to which the team's investigations lead. For example, a team working on the improvement of mathematics teaching in the school may initially explore new approaches to learning in their own classrooms, approaches that may be adopted schoolwide and that will in the long run involve many other teachers in the school in the professional development they need to use the new approaches effectively.

By reporting on the results of their efforts to the school and community, the teams will be sharing at least some of the knowledge they have gained with their colleagues who are less directly involved. As already noted, this new knowledge is itself an important form of professional development.

Providing Initial Support For the School Improvement Teams

Once the school improvement teams have been designated, the school needs to make initial provisions for the teams to operate effectively. Among the initial support that teams may need is knowledge of effective professional development and collaboration, a clear idea of just what resources are available to facilitate their work, and administrative assistance in securing the specific time, expertise, and assistance that their work will require.

To get started, school improvement teams should:

- ✓ Learn about effective professional development and collaboration.
- ✓ Be informed of the funding available to support their work.
- ✓ Be helped to schedule their work time and find assistance.

Learning About How to Work Effectively

At the beginning of their work, school improvement teams should have a chance to learn about the concepts and research involved in effective professional development and to develop the skills of productive collaboration.

Many teachers' knowledge of professional development may be limited to what they

have experienced—often short-term, fragmented, and occasional inservice workshops and presentations. As a result, when teachers are given the chance to specify what sort of professional development they want, they may end up choosing traditional activities. Similarly, since teachers rarely have the opportunity to work with one another on joint projects, they may need help to organize their work to take advantage of their complementary interests and talents.

Q & A

Q: *Who should arrange for this initial help?*

A critical function of principal leadership lies in providing for this start-up assistance, either directly or by making arrangements for others to do so. Of course, the extent or even the necessity of this initial assistance will depend upon the background and experience of the teachers involved. Because so much of the responsibility for initial assistance to the teams falls to the principal, education in these responsibilities and how to meet them may be of particular importance to the success of school-based professional development.

Q: *Where can the principal look for assistance?*

This document may be of real use to the teams in summarizing that information and pointing teachers to other books and articles in which these ideas are reported and explained at greater length. But more important, the principal may need to make arrangements for teams to consult with others at the school, the central office, IDOE, educational service centers, universities, or unions who have firsthand knowledge of and experience with professional development conducted in this way.

Disclosure of Available Resources

It is important early in the work of the teams for the principal to specify the size of the resource pool available for school improvement so that the teams can plan effectively for its use.

The reservoir of resources to support the work of the school improvement teams is not only substantively important for the work itself but also symbolically important as a token that the school and district take that work seriously. Resources can, however, be dispensed in ways that may undermine the trust that is to exist between administrators and the teams.

Q & A

Q: *Does this disclosure contradict principals' duties as fiscal agents for their schools?*

Not at all. Certainly, principals necessarily exercise final authority over the funds that support the teams, but that should not prohibit disclosure. Besides, principals must not be perceived as using this fiscal authority to constrain the thoughtful and creative work of the teams. As a result, frankness about the amount of available support and the full range of legitimate uses allowed by the school district is important for encouraging and maintaining the professional standing of the teams. Of course, initial disclosure does not necessarily mean either that additional resources may not be made available for particular needs as they arise or that all of those funds must be spent by each team.

THE RESERVOIR OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS IS IMPORTANT BOTH SUBSTANTIVELY AND SYMBOLICALLY.

Help in Gaining Access To Time and Other Assistance

A special role for the principal lies in planning with the teams well in advance a schedule to make adequate time available during the school year for them to work together and in locating other resources.

Beyond the trusting atmosphere within which school-based professional development is conducted, time to be involved in school improvement activities is probably the most important form of support. Indeed, most of the principles of effective professional development speak in one way or another to the proper configuration and use of teacher time. However, teachers rarely have the authority or opportunity to regulate or schedule their own time. And they often do not have the contacts to find other resources they need.[9]

Q & A

Q: *Why does advance planning for time enhance the work of the teams?*

One reason for advance scheduling is to ensure that school improvement work is built into the team members' calendars and not simply left to the exigencies of last minute schedule changes. Advance planning permits team members to plan confidently for their work, knowing that arrangements have already been made for them to be available for the team's meetings and other activities. In scheduling this time, the principal has the opportunity to provide the combined support and pressure that leadership requires.

Q: *Don't substitutes disrupt instruction?*

Teachers, parents, and students often experience the use of ad hoc substitutes as a significant loss of instructional time and continuity. Planning allows the employment of part-time teachers, teachers shared with other schools, and regular substitutes who become fully involved in their students' ongoing program of instruction. Making these more permanent arrangements may also ease the difficulty that some schools have in finding substitutes on an ad hoc basis.

Q: *Will all the teams' needs be met by regularly scheduled time?*

Teams are almost certain to require some flexibility in the use of their time for special occasions, such as visits to other schools, research in college libraries, and extended sessions with consultants. As projects mature, teachers may need release time to observe and coach one another's efforts. The principal's role is to free team members on these special occasions. Even in this case, conferring with the teams in advance can allow for the selection of substitutes who can be fully briefed about planned class work.

Operating the School Improvement Teams

As school improvement teams enter into their projects, conditions have been established that promote focused application of their energies to particular problems of student engagement and learning in the school:

1. a clear definition of the problem to be addressed;
2. an assurance that the problem is of real importance to the school community;
3. knowledge that resources are available to assist teams in their work on the problem;
4. background information and training on effective working procedures; and
5. regularly scheduled time on the job to conduct their work.

The specific details of each team's activities will obviously depend on the nature of the particular problem to be addressed and the intellectual, professional, and creative talents of team members. Nevertheless, some general guidance for addressing school problems can be useful.

As they work, school improvement teams should:
✓ Analyze data relevant to the priority they are addressing.
✓ Try out solutions to the problems they have found.
✓ Seek evidence about the effects of their efforts.
✓ Ask for outside help in understanding their problems and in identifying and testing solutions.
✓ Provide chances for effective learning to colleagues at the school.

Be Data Driven and Exploratory

School improvement teams should gather data to clarify the problem and to evaluate their tentative solutions.

Data gathered during priority identification form the improvement team's initial understanding of the problem. However, data sufficient to see that a problem exists often do not reveal much about the precise nature of that problem. For example, school discipline records may reveal an unacceptably high rate of violent interactions among students at a school. Data at that level of aggregation are sufficient to alert the school community to a problem that needs attention. But developing solutions to that problem requires

a much more detailed analysis of the data. Do the interactions take place between older and younger students or between age peers? Do violent incidents take place on the playground or in classrooms? Answers to detailed questions such as these are crucial to an understanding of the problem and, therefore, to an intelligent response to it.

Q & A

Q: *Where does evaluation fit into the work of the teams?*

As tentative solutions to the problem are developed and tried, data should be monitored for signs of constructive change. There are two aspects to this monitoring process. To take the example of student violence mentioned above, it may turn out that a pattern of violent interactions between older and younger students seemed apparent. Obviously, the team that has implemented reforms in the school's discipline procedures to reverse this pattern should observe the incidence of these particular interactions. At the same time, however, the team should also keep an eye on the overall incidence of violence. It may turn out that the changes adopted have had the unanticipated consequence of increasing violent interactions between age peers at the same time that they have discouraged those interactions between older and younger students. Thus, the ongoing evaluation of changes should encompass the details and the overall effects of the change.

THE ONGOING EVALUATION SHOULD ENCOMPASS THE DETAILS AND THE OVERALL EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN PRACTICE.

Seek Outside Help

Teams should seek assistance in understanding and addressing their school improvement priorities from practitioners, researchers, and administrators outside the school.

Team members learn through seeking, analyzing, and monitoring data about school problems and through devising and testing new or revised procedures for the school. In both cases, outsiders—be they from the school district, other schools, professional associations, IDOE, educational service centers, or universities—can make valuable contributions. Effective professional development is not, above all, the sharing of ignorance.

Outsiders offer school improvement teams several important advantages. Since they are uninvolved in the day-to-day complexity of the school, outsiders can help a team focus on the particular priority it is to address and develop the detached view of the school necessary for productive change to occur. They may possess skills in data generation and analysis and in evaluation and research that teachers have not had a chance to develop. Outsiders may bring an acquaintance with subject matter, practice, and research unfamiliar to the teams. They may introduce to teachers the skills needed to coach their colleagues.

Q & A

Q: *Hasn't traditional professional development relied too much on outsiders?*

Yes, but the role of outsiders in the sort of professional development described here is entirely different. Their task is to contribute to the work on a problem that the school has defined, not to deliver a prepackaged presentation; outsiders in this process share in the work of the teams. It is imperative that outsiders have the capacity to listen and observe as well as to explain their own thoughts and experience. In addition, since the point of school improvement is to build the capacity of the school, outsiders should be expected to leave something of themselves behind. Effective outsiders are not only good listeners and collaborators but also good teachers of the skills that they bring to the teams.

Not only will schools make different use of outsiders than traditional professional development does, they may make a lot more use of them. As is obvious from the catalog of skills that outsiders may bring to the school improvement team, it would be rare to find all these skills in a single person. Teams might seek assistance from several outsiders with different areas of proven expertise.

Q: *Won't it be hard to find this sort of help?*

Maybe, but some current providers already are alert to these emerging needs. And it is important to make clear to potential providers that those engaged in school-based professional development need a different sort of assistance. Describing one's needs clearly is a crucial first step in having them met. And teams should ask for help in locating this assistance.

Implement Changes Thoughtfully

The aim of implementation beyond the members of the team should be for colleagues at the school to become full partners in making the change.

Improvement teams work for the school, not for themselves. Thus, their task is only half done when they develop effective ways to tackle the school's priorities in their own classrooms. The second half of their job is to help their colleagues make use of their work in other classrooms. At this point in the school improvement process, it is critical that the teams utilize effective methods of professional development.

Q & A

Q: *What will these colleagues need?*

They need everything that team members themselves had—learning the theory behind the change, a chance to observe new approaches and to practice them in their own classrooms, feedback about their progress, and, most important, an opportunity to reflect upon and make modifications in the approaches based on their own experience and the concrete results of their practice.

Q: *Won't that cost money?*

Yes, and, at this point, the focus of the school's reservoir of resources shifts from supporting the team itself to supporting the work of their colleagues who are to take advantage of the team's work. The reservoir most particularly must be devoted to giving these colleagues the time necessary to engage in the full range of these activities. As a result, the principal once again has a special role in freeing and scheduling these individuals' time.

Maintaining Communication And Meaningful Accountability

Because the work of the teams is itself so demanding and absorbing, there is a natural temptation to focus only on that work itself. But such an exclusive focus erodes trust and neglects an opportunity for the school community to recognize the work of the school improvement teams. As a result, reporting is a crucial step in effective professional development. These reports can take a variety of forms, but they should be made by the teams themselves, not just the school principal. After all, it is important to remind the school community precisely who is involved in these activities so that they can be recognized and saluted for their efforts.

To inform others about their work, school improvement teams should:

- ✓ Report to parents and colleagues at the school several times a year.
- ✓ Annually report to school boards, administrators, and union officials.
- ✓ Include in their reports their analysis of the problems, what action is being taken to remedy them, and what the results are.

Q & A

Q: *When and how should reports to parents be made?*

Parent reports need to be frequent because children are immediately affected by the reallocation and rescheduling of teacher time. If the school publishes a regular newsletter, columns written by a member of each team should be included in each issue. If no such communication vehicle exists, the principal must ensure that a special publication on the school improvement teams is sent home three or four times a year. The reports need not be elaborate; they should simply update parents on the work of the teams and perhaps alert them to any departures from the school's procedures that the work will involve in the near future. It may also be appropriate to include brief oral reports at meetings of the school's parent teacher association.

Q: *How should the faculty be kept informed?*

Of course teachers at the school should also receive these reports to parents. Other reports to teachers at the school are just as important but need not be particularly formal; they may very well take place at regular meetings in the school either of the entire faculty or of departments particularly affected by the projects. However, two

things must be kept in mind in scheduling such reports. First, since all teachers have a stake in the work of the teams even if they are not directly affected by them, the entire faculty should be given an update on the teams' progress at least once a year. Second, teachers should be invited to make comments or ask questions about the reports. Since the teams work for the entire school, the faculty has a reasonable expectation of responsiveness from the teams. The intent of these exchanges is to promote in the wider faculty the sort of collegiality that develops within the teams themselves.

Q: *How often should reports be made to school boards, central office administrators, and union officials?*

At least annually. These reports should be both written and oral, with the written part of the report provided as background received in advance. Depending on the size of the school district, it may make the most sense to schedule a common session at a school board meeting for all of the schools in the district to report at once. Such an event gives central actors an overall picture of school improvement, allows teams from other schools to hear about the progress at peer institutions, and emphasizes the seriousness with which the school district takes the work of the teams.

Q: *What should these reports include?*

Reports should include the procedures the teams are following, their analysis of the problem and potential solutions, and what they know about the results of their efforts, although their length and elaborateness will vary with the audience. Obviously at the beginning, the reports will be heavily weighted to procedures—what the team has done. But even at a relatively early stage, the team can share its analysis of data on the problem. Somewhat later, the team members can share the alternative solutions they are considering and the criteria they will use in choosing among them. As team members begin to try out solutions, they can report on the new approaches and how they work in practice. Finally, as the project matures, teams can outline the evaluation data they are collecting and how the teams are responding to those data..

Establishing New Priorities

The ideal of effective professional development is continuous learning for teachers and students alike. Members of individual teams and the other teachers who become involved in the implementation of their work engage in continuous learning through developing, refining, and testing new approaches. But the completion of improvement projects must not mark the end of professional learning in the school.

Rather, completion of one task is a signal to begin work on other improvement priorities. The sense of success that completing an improvement project generates among all a school's professionals is further stimulus to renewed attention to improvement of the school.

As teams conclude their work, the school should:
✓ Ascertain new priorities for continued work.
✓ Designate new school improvement teams.

Q & A

Q: *Won't the new priorities be obvious, based on a previous identification process?*

In many cases. When the previously identified priorities still seem to apply, the school should at the very least confirm in faculty and parent meetings the continued importance of the task to be assigned to a new improvement team.

Q: *Why would the priorities ever be any different?*

Sometimes, the work of the improvement teams will change the community's understanding of the school significantly. After all, their analysis of the problem they are addressing will bring to light information about the school not previously available. And their efforts at solving the problem may reveal potentials among the school's students and faculty not considered before. At other times, the circumstances of the school may have changed dramatically. Then the school should engage in yet another round of priority identification so that the assignment given to a new improvement team will reflect a shared purpose of the school community.

PEER COACHING IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS TO SEE WHAT COLLEAGUES ARE DOING IN THEIR CLASSROOMS.

—PATRICIA BURTON
PRINCIPAL, HARCOURT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE •

HARCOURT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FINDING THE TIME

Corporation: MSD Washington Township
Principal: Patricia Burton
Address: 7535 Harcourt Road, Indianapolis, IN 46260
Phone: 317-259-5458

If Harcourt teachers need time or money for something important, principal Patricia Burton usually sees that they get it. And three of the activities she deems most important are collaborative decision making, grade level planning, and peer coaching.

Almost all teachers are members of at least one committee: the curriculum continuity committee, the school climate committee, the staff development committee, or the student enrichment committee, for example. Through these committees, teachers not only have the opportunity to discuss key aspects of school improvement; they also have a voice in many of the major decisions made at the school.

Committees meet after school but on contract time, said Burton. If they meet outside contract time, the teachers generally get stipends for the extra time they put in.

Same-grade teachers also have the opportunity for half-day or even whole-day discussion and planning sessions, Burton said. She will figure out some way to provide class cover for them, usually in the form of substitutes or instructional aides. She also supports innovations that emerge from these sessions. For example, Harcourt's three third-grade teachers wanted to teach certain skills to small groups of students rather than to whole classes. So one day a week for five weeks running, Burton hired a substitute teacher. She also arranged for these sessions to fall on a day when the Title One coordinator and Title One assistant would be in the building to provide additional cover. This freed the third grade teachers to teach groups of 10 to 12 students instead of regular-size classes of 25 or more.

Burton also supports peer observation and coaching. If teachers want to observe one another, Burton will make every effort to provide cover for them. "Peer coaching is a good opportunity for teachers to see what colleagues are doing in their classrooms," she said. "They have found it to be very beneficial. They have picked up a lot of good ideas from their counterparts here in the building."

These types of professional development activities are helping to ensure that Harcourt teachers stay on the cutting edge of educational innovation.

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CHAPTER 4

RETHINKING THE ROLE OF CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTORS

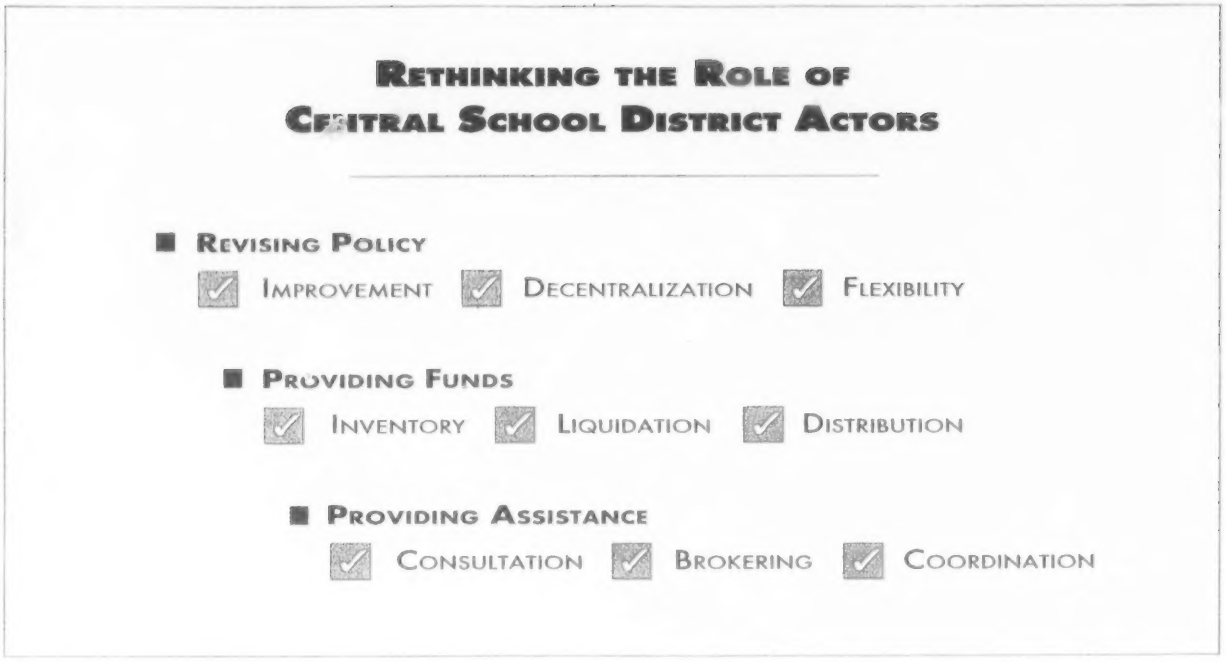
SCHOOL BOARDS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND UNIONS

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHIFTS RESPONSIBILITY for the improvement of student performance from the school district to the school. That shift does not imply, however, that central school district actors are irrelevant to school-based professional development. Quite the contrary, it means that those actors must be more deliberate than ever in formulating their policies and executing them, for their role is to activate and facilitate improvement.

In thinking about the role of central actors, it is important to maintain a broad definition of the actors who matter. School boards, central office administrators, and union officials all have different roles in creating an environment conducive to effective professional development. As will become plain, many features of this environment can be established by means of school board policy, contract provisions, and administrative practice. Therefore, this chapter is addressed to all these actors in their various roles.

As Figure 3, on the following page, suggests, this chapter considers ways in which central actors can use the resources at their disposal—policy, funding, and assistance—to promote effective professional development in every school. These approaches are particularly relevant to schools using the process discussed in Chapter 3, although they also support other promising alternatives. Again, unique circumstances in particular school districts may make some of this advice inapplicable; it is offered only as a starting point for discussion and deliberation. Moreover, following this advice cannot ensure that effective professional development will automatically occur. Just as with school improvement, thoughtful adaptation of these approaches will be necessary to determine the precise policies, funding, and assistance that optimize school improvement and effective professional development in a particular district.

FIGURE 3



POLICY

IN THE MOST GENERAL TERMS, THE TASK OF CENTRAL ACTORS in promoting effective professional development is to pursue policies that facilitate school-based improvement and to change policies that impose barriers to it. To facilitate this process, the school district should authorize individual schools to undertake the improvement of student performance. To eliminate barriers, the district should enhance schools' decision-making authority over critical elements of the schooling process.

Just as important as the specific policies adopted or changed, central actors should approach these tasks with the awareness that their action fosters the trust that effective professional development requires. Once again, trust rests on three foundations—shared purposes, discretion, and meaningful accountability. Shared purposes require that the policies are the result of widely participatory and consultative processes. Discretion requires that those who undertake school

CENTRAL ACTORS SHOULD REVISE POLICIES TO:
✓ AUTHORIZE SCHOOLS TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS THEIR OWN IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES.
✓ DELEGATE TO SCHOOLS THE AUTHORITY TO CHANGE THEIR PRACTICES.
✓ ENABLE SCHOOLS TO SEEK OTHER POLICY CHANGES THEY MAY NEED TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE.

improvement and effective professional development have reasonable control over decisions necessary to their work. Meaningful accountability requires that expectations are realistic and known in advance. Thus, the policies to be modified or adopted should establish these foundations.

Improvement

> **School district policies toward the improvement of student performance should create clear expectations for the active involvement of each school's teachers, principals, and other staff in establishing and pursuing their own plans for improvement.**

There are as many theories about the improvement of schools as there are school board members, central administrators, and union officials in a school district. Some find student discipline to be the key. Others want more work on student problem-solving skills. Still others believe more attention to basic skills is needed. But the task of central actors in promoting effective professional development is not to opt for any particular theory of improvement and to enforce it on all the schools; it is, rather, to establish the conditions under which schools can become actively engaged in the work of school improvement.

Q & A

Q: *Doesn't PBA prevent districts from putting schools in charge of their own improvement?*

No, it doesn't. Though the state's PBA system requires each district to plan to improve its schools, school districts have flexibility in meeting that requirement. The district might, on the one hand, adopt a detailed districtwide action plan that each school is to follow. On the other hand, it may create a process that enables each school to construct its own individual action plan within broad guidelines for participation and for the focus of that plan on student performance. This second alternative is far more consistent with the principles of effective professional development in that it recognizes that improvement and professional development are school based and encourages collaboration in identifying priorities and developing strategies to meet them.

Q: *Is this approach consistent with the supervisory responsibilities of school boards and administrators?*

Completely. In the first place, the guidelines for the process do not leave schools free to construct their improvement plans in any way that the principal or others at the school might choose; they establish clear expectations about who is to be involved and for the centrality of student learning. Second, this approach can and should provide for endorsement of the school improvement priorities by appropriate authorities. But most important, the school priorities, once endorsed, become a basis for meaningful school accountability to the district; those priorities identify conditions at the school that are to be addressed and create expectations for action by school staff that can and should be monitored and recognized by the district. In a very real way, this approach will provide these authorities with greater assurance that the schools are working to better themselves and more knowledge of their accomplishments.

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Decentralization

To the extent possible, the school district's policies should delegate to schools and their school improvement teams the authority to make the decisions on which school improvement is likely to depend.

Such a school-based approach to improvement can, however, lead to more frustration than constructive action if other district policies unduly limit the changes that schools may make in the pursuit of their improvement priorities. If, for example, a district dictates the particular instructional materials that all schools are to use, one important resource for improving instruction has been denied to school improvement teams. Admittedly, each district must operate within a particular framework of laws and regulations promulgated by the state. But two factors permit school districts the authority to delegate at least some responsibilities to individual schools. First, districts now enjoy home rule, which gives them authority over matters not specifically regulated by the state. Second, even in those arenas covered by state law, districts have some room for local decision making, which at least in some areas state authorities have expanded (for instance, the State Board of Education has changed the minutes of instruction in various subjects from requirements to recommendations). *(Continued on page 89.)*

The School on Wheels has its own principal, its own bus, and a sense of togetherness and collegiality that some regular schools might envy.

• Principles in Practice •

THE SCHOOL ON WHEELS

Expanded Staffing for Professional Development

Corporation: Anderson Community School Corporation
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Providing release time for professional development—the bane of all school districts! It's hard enough to send one or two teachers to a conference. What's to be done when a group of teachers or even an entire staff needs release time to participate in professional development?

The Anderson Community School Corporation has devised an ingenious solution to the perennial problem of release time: the School on Wheels (SW), a cadre of 25 permanent substitute teachers who travel as a team from school to school freeing regular teachers for professional development. The School on Wheels has its own principal, its own bus, and a sense of togetherness and collegiality that some regular schools might envy. It is large enough to fill in for the entire staff at all but three elementary schools in the corporation. It can cover middle school staffs over a two-day period and high school staffs over three.

The School on Wheels operates on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and SW teachers are paid a higher rate on those days than regular subs ($60 vs. $45). On Mondays and Fridays, SW teachers become part of the regular substitute pool. Overall, the district allocates about $250,000 per year for the program, said Ingrid Carney, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, who brought the idea with her when she came to Anderson from Chicago. The School on Wheels is a modified version of Chicago's Project CANAL's instructional cadre. The concept of an instructional cadre, combined with Anderson Superintendent Jane Kendrick's vision of a staff development plan that would retool teachers and provide demonstration lessons for students, resulted in the School on Wheels.

Teachers hired for the School on Wheels must have at least a college degree, although many have teaching licenses, said Carney. Before entering the classroom to teach, they undergo three days of training at the beginning of the school year; they visit each school in the corporation; they shadow regular teachers; and they develop lesson plans of their own. When they actually begin substituting for regular teachers, they always contact the regular teachers in advance to share plans and request input.

When the School on Wheels returns to a school for the second and third time, the same SW teachers are assigned to the same classrooms. "That way," said Carney,

"there is continuity of instruction, and the children and the teachers become comfortable with each other."

This practice also helps with parent perceptions of the program, said Carney. "We've had no complaints from parents," she said, "and overwhelmingly positive support from teachers."

Not only does the School on Wheels increase professional development opportunities for regular teachers while continuing quality instruction for students, but it also serves as a wonderful training ground for future teachers. SW teachers get to develop lesson plans, teach in a number of different grades, and serve in a number of different schools. Indeed, many who begin teaching in the School on Wheels program end up being hired by the corporation as regular teachers. "Every elementary school hire this year was from the School on Wheels," said Carney. "It's a great internship for them."

Not only does the School on Wheels increase professional development opportunities for regular teachers while continuing quality instruction for students, but it also serves as a wonderful training ground for future teachers.

Q & A

Q: *What authority should be delegated to schools and why?*

At the very least, scheduling, discipline, curriculum, instructional materials and technology, instructional procedures, and student assessment are the basic instruments that schools use to influence student performance; policies about these matters should be considered for delegation. These policies are likely to be important in the improvement efforts of schools. To take only one example, the state's ISTEP program clearly defines some instruments and occasions for student assessment; however, districts usually have additional testing policies. These additional policies may very well constrain the choices that schools might make to adapt student assessment to their priorities for school improvement. District authorities should consider whether these student assessment policies might be eliminated or at least treated as requirements that schools may modify to implement a school improvement project.

DISTRICTS HAVE MUCH LATITUDE TO DELEGATE THE AUTHORITY SCHOOLS NEED TO IMPROVE THEMSELVES.

FLEXIBILITY

When delegating authority to schools is not possible, school district policies should authorize district officials to adapt district regulations to the needs of individual schools' improvement efforts.

There are likely to be some district policies that central actors either do not believe appropriate to delegate or do not initially consider to have an important connection to school improvement. As the focus groups emphasized, however, the conditions of instruction are, to a surprising extent, set by seemingly non-instructional policies or practices. For example, suppose a promising instructional program requires a revision in the length of the school day, but the district's scheduling of transportation is already determined by contract. In this case, the necessity for students to arrive at a specified time in the morning and to leave at a specified time in the afternoon makes the desired revision unworkable.

Q & A

Q: *Won't allowing exceptions create a lot more work for the board?*

Not necessarily. In fact, a blanket policy might be negotiated that allows individual schools to ask district administrators in consultation with union officials to make an exception to a particular policy or alternative arrangements to facilitate the work of school improvement teams. This blanket policy should, at the very least, provide the authority to grant agreed exceptions or make the needed arrangements, with perhaps a report to the board. It might provide that these accommodations be made unless, say, administrators or union officials deem the fiscal or educational impact on the district to be substantial, in which case the request would be automatically directed to the board for a negotiated resolution.

Q: *Won't these policies of delegation and flexibility in the interests of school improvement run the risk that various schools in the district may end up with quite different programs?*

Possibly, but that is not necessarily bad. Students at these schools and their teachers are likely to bring considerably different talents, backgrounds, and aspirations to the process of schooling. As a result, what works at one school may often be entirely ineffective at another. Moreover, these different programs are enacted in the interest of improved student learning, not for the sake of variation itself. Thus, while programs may vary, they do so with the common aim of student excellence.

THE PRESENCE OF ENTHUSIASTIC TEACHERS AND SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS AT A LOCAL SCHOOL MAKES EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS ATTRACTIVE TO OTHER SCHOOLS.

Finally, even if some of these programs might be appropriate elsewhere in the district, it is important that they get started *somewhere*, preferably at a school where the teachers, parents, and students are willing to give them an honest try. The presence of enthusiastic teachers and successful students at a local school makes effective programs attractive to other schools, particularly if those schools are working on similar school improvement priorities. Thus, this school-based approach to improvement and professional development may in the long run be the most effective way to implement widely the programs that prove to be appropriate for different schools within the same district.

Funding

One of the most frequent questions in the teacher and principal focus groups was, "Just where will funding for the reservoir of resources come from?" Many who asked this question quite properly sought help from state policymakers, including additional state revenue. Indeed, Indiana has good reason to change its policies to facilitate school-based professional development.

Central actors should allow each school to establish a reservoir of resources for school improvement by:

- ✓ Inventorying *all* current funding for professional development and school improvement.
- ✓ Assigning as much of that current funding as possible to the school reservoirs.
- ✓ Considering the use of other funds for the school reservoirs.
- ✓ Distributing the funds to schools on the basis of size and need.

Such a change was proposed in *Professional Development and Teacher Time: Principles, Guidelines, and Policy Options for Indiana* (Bull et al., 1994). That report recommended that the General Assembly appropriate approximately $40 million annually to fund a reservoir of five person-days per full-time equivalent teacher in schools in the PBA year or on probation and three person-days in all other schools. The report also asked the General Assembly and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to consider establishing start-up services and a supportive infrastructure to help schools make effective use of this reservoir of teacher time.

The State Board of Education has made a budget request for professional development and has established a subcommittee to continue its work. The IDOE has created an Office of School and Professional Development and reorganized various programs that support professional development. Similarly, in 1995 the Indiana Association of Colleges of Teacher Education called for more financial support and especially for more interagency coordination in state professional development policies. Despite these and other efforts, the General Assembly has not yet acted.

Even though these changes have not been made, a good deal can be done on the local level to establish the requisite reservoir of resources. At present, funds for the reservoir must come from budget reallocation or revision. Funding from these sources is probably not entirely sufficient, but it may allow schools to get started on the tasks of effective professional development and, thus, to develop evidence that may encourage legislators to provide more adequate funding.

INVENTORY

The first step in making a reservoir of resources for professional development available to each school is for the school district to conduct as complete a survey as possible of the funding currently used to support professional development and school improvement in all their various forms.

If schools in Indiana are at all like those in other states, a surprising amount is already allocated to and spent on professional development. A study of California schools conducted by Judith Warren Little and her colleagues in 1987 estimated that 1.8% of school funding was spent on personnel and materials for professional development ($1,360 per teacher). In a 1994 study of four large school districts, researchers at Boston's Educational Development Center found that such outlays varied from 1.8% to 2.8% of annual operating expenditures (Miller, et al.). When other expenditures related to professional development—such as salary increments for graduate courses and personnel supervision and evaluation—are added, the total cost of current professional development ranges from 3% to 7% of the local operating budget for schools, according to a 1995 estimate by researcher Thomas Corcoran. As reporter David Lindsay wrote in 1996, the Flint, Michigan, school district found nearly $2 million devoted explicitly to professional development in the budgets of its various programs; over $12 million a year—about 6% of the operating budget—was spent when salary increments and other personnel costs were taken into account.

THERE MAY BE SUBSTANTIAL, IF NOT COMPLETELY SUFFICIENT, FUNDING CURRENTLY WITHIN LOCAL BUDGETS TO BE REALLOCATED FROM TRADITIONAL TO SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Obviously, there is considerable variation from one school district to another, but the lesson here is that there *may be* substantial, if not completely sufficient, funding currently within local budgets to be reallocated from traditional to school-based professional development.

Not all of this funding should necessarily be devoted to school-based professional development. As economist David Monk argued in 1994, a good case can be made for encouraging teachers to continue their formal education, particularly in the subjects they teach and the pedagogical methods relevant to those subjects. Nevertheless, central actors cannot get a clear idea of their ability to support effective professional development without understanding what is now spent for the encouragement of teacher learning and for school improvement.

Q & A

Q: *How should this inventory be conducted?*

Central actors should cast as wide a net as they can. Some items are obvious—expenditures for consultants, workshops, teacher travel to conferences, and so on. But the inventory also should include such items as relevant central office salaries, salaries at teacher resource centers in schools or central facilities, expenditures for professional subscriptions or other materials, and even teacher salaries for inservice days and formal education salary increments earned by teachers. The intent of this inventory is to make visible as much of the current spending for professional development and school improvement as possible, so that its use for the schools' reservoirs can at least be considered.

Liquidation

The next step in creating a reservoir of resources at each school is to consider how much of the current funding for professional development, for school improvement, and even for other purposes can be converted into undesignated funds from which the reservoirs can be created.

Once a reasonably good idea of the funding now expended for professional development and school improvement is achieved, central actors should consider the advantage of each expenditure in comparison to the potential value it will have in support of school-based improvement and professional development efforts. As this consideration takes place, it is inevitable that the relative value of other expenditures will also come under scrutiny.

Q & A

Q: *Won't the reallocation and revision of the budget be controversial?*

Certainly. Inservice education days, for example, are such fixtures of school life that considering a redeployment of those resources is likely to meet resistance. Nevertheless, the teachers consulted in the focus groups were generally dissatisfied with what happens on those days and suggested that they and their colleagues might be

willing to entertain a change that represents a more productive use of their time. Moreover, there is no formula to simplify the task; it inevitably requires the risks and uncertainties of human judgment and honest negotiation.

Q: *How should this task be approached?*

Central actors can ask themselves at least two questions as they review these expenditures. The first is, "Will this expenditure be likely to help schools identify their priorities or school improvement teams meet those priorities?" For example, some contracts for professional development with educational service centers already enable those centers to provide flexible, on-demand consultative and training services to individual schools. As such, they may be easily adapted to school-based improvement efforts. Or, by contrast, some centrally managed workshops on predetermined subjects may be either poorly adapted to the needs of individual schools or conducted without sufficient follow-up. Expenditures of the first kind might remain in place; those of the second kind could be converted in the future into funding for the school reservoirs.

A second question is, "Can the district make an incremental change in these expenditures that might eventually provide the evidence needed to evaluate a more substantial change in the future?" Before considering, for example, whether to eliminate contractual inservice days altogether and to place the teacher salaries they represent into the school reservoirs, certain incremental steps might be attempted. For one, the inservice days might be retained, but schools might be allowed to plan for them individually as part of their priority identification process. For another, perhaps only the negotiated salary increase for those days might be placed in school reservoirs. Anyway, these steps might be initially a lot more feasible, provide at least some resources for school-based efforts, and possibly pave the way for more dramatic changes if they prove successful.

Q: *How often should this review of expenditures for professional development occur?*

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The review should be ongoing from year to year. While establishing an initial reservoir of resources at each school is critical, schools' and the district's continuing experience with school-based professional development should be considered as future budgets

are established. If schools demonstrate the success of this approach for student learning, central actors will have good reason to expand the size of the reservoirs, perhaps even considering whether some district expenditures for purposes other than professional development might be more effectively used for school-based improvement.

Distribution and Authorization

The final step in creating a reservoir of resources at each school is to distribute the pool of undesignated funds fairly to each school and to delegate to the schools the authority to disburse those funds for school improvement.

The issue of fair distribution is especially critical to maintaining the atmosphere of trust needed for effective professional development; individual schools must see themselves as treated on the same basis as other schools for their parents, teachers, and other staff to be willing to cooperate fully in the demanding work of self-criticism and revision that school improvement involves. To this end, school districts should establish an explicit policy for distributing those funds, a policy that has received public deliberation and whose eventual rationale is publicized to the affected school communities.

Q & A

Q: *What factors might be considered in drafting this policy?*

One is that all schools deserve some share of the district's funds. This factor might initially lead a district to set each school's reservoir in proportion to the number of teachers or students at each school. A second factor is the need of particular schools for resources to support improvement. For example, past difficulties in student performance at a school (particularly those that have led to PBA probation) or current imbalances in the proportion of a school's children from socioeconomically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds might suggest that certain schools have more need for improvement resources than others. This consideration might lead a district, in addition to the initial reservoir based on school size, to provide supplemental funding that depends on relevant circumstances at the school.

Q: *What guidelines should there be for using these funds?*

A school district should make it clear that the funds are to be used only to support the identification of school improvement priorities and the activities of the school improvement teams, with a priority on making teacher time available. But beyond this, few, if any, restrictions on the use of these funds should be established since the needs of the school improvement teams are likely to vary, depending on the particular priorities they are addressing and the progress of their work. Moreover, effective professional development engages the teams in such a wide range of legitimate activities—analysis, research, consultation, training, follow-up, and evaluation—that additional restraints on their authority to use the reservoir of resources would almost certainly hamper the work of improvement.

Assistance

Beyond the material support for school improvement that funding the reservoirs at each school provides, schools require a variety of intellectual and practical help for effective professional development. After all, teachers will undertake activities with which they are unlikely to have much experience. The support they need includes assistance in understanding their new roles, in developing new skills in working as school improvement teams, and in efficiently locating the resources required in their efforts at improvement. Thus, district personnel have important responsibilities in effective professional development, responsibilities that may be different from those assigned in the past.

Central actors should assist the schools' efforts at improvement and professional development by:

- ✓ Providing the background training and information they need.
- ✓ Enabling schools to locate and obtain outside help.
- ✓ Keeping schools informed about the improvement efforts at other schools in the district.

Information, Consultation, And Training

A significant proportion of the professional development resources retained at the school district level should be used to educate school communities about the school improvement process, to supply schools with the data they need, and to assist school improvement teams to understand and carry out their roles.

School-based improvement and professional development impose new intellectual demands on teachers, principals, and others at the school level. They begin to understand their school communities and to conceive their own responsibilities toward those communities in ways that have rarely, if ever, been expected of them. Especially at the beginning of their work, they are likely to need help in meeting these new intellectual challenges, help that central office and other personnel can provide.

Q & A

Q: *Shouldn't all a district's resources for professional development be provided to schools?*

A majority, but not all. For example, the district will need to meet the common needs that teachers, principals, and others at the school are likely to have in becoming familiar with and undertaking their new responsibilities in the school improvement process. Educational service centers and the IDOE may also have a significant role in meeting these needs. In fact, some service centers around the state already offer this type of training, and the IDOE has conducted regional workshops to foster knowledge of and planning for effective professional development. Help for principals in particular is available from the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy. Thus, school districts, particularly smaller ones, may want to call upon these agencies for help in carrying out this function.

Q: *What role should district personnel have in evaluating school-based professional development?*

Basically that of facilitating schools' evaluation efforts. If the conversations with focus groups of teachers and principals are any indication of needs across the state, assistance in the ongoing evaluation of school improvement projects is likely to be essential. Although teachers are experts in assessing the progress of individual students, they rarely have had the chance to design strategies for measuring progress across the entire school.

The data used in identifying the priorities and in analyzing the problems that underlie those priorities are key to school improvement teams' evaluation of their work. Central actors, then, must be especially diligent in their efforts to help schools identify, collect,

and understand these data. Moreover, complex technical issues are often involved in determining the effect of school improvement teams' actions to change the school. Central actors can provide teams with consultation and assistance on these technical issues as they develop methods and acquire skills to determine these effects. The intent of this assistance is to enable school improvement teams to become effective researchers into their own practice.

Brokering Resources

Most of the remainder of the school district's central resources for professional development should be used to help school improvement teams gain access to relevant research, examples of relevant programs at other schools, and appropriately qualified consultants.

As improvement teams attempt to find solutions to the school problems they have identified and analyzed, they will inevitably seek outside assistance from those with appropriate knowledge and experience. Yet teachers often lack the connections and knowledge to locate the outside help they need. As a result, central actors have a particular role in brokering these resources.

Q & A

Q: *How directive should those who broker resources be?*

Not very. The most vital characteristic of this assistance is that it be fully responsive to the express needs of the school improvement teams. These personnel can, of course, and probably should make suggestions about resources the teams might find useful, as long as those suggestions are not intended or perceived as dictates in disguise. Finally, they should arrange for outside help in close consultation with the teams so that the teams feel a commitment to making the best use of that help.

Q: *Where might a district seek help in locating resources?*

Educational service centers, IDOE personnel, and universities may be especially effective in this role, for large and small districts alike. Their work with several school districts often gives them a

knowledge of a variety of schools with programs that may be informative for school improvement teams' work.

Q: *What sort of outside assistance will be most useful for school-based professional development?*

Consultants are key, but the consultants useful to school improvement teams will be different from those involved in more traditional inservice training. School improvement teams will often need to establish a long-term relationship with consultants that involves facilitation of their work and coaching, for example. Teams also will be modifying consultants' suggestions and evaluating the effects on student performance. Thus, a different set of qualifications may be more appropriate here—acquaintance with research, availability, ability to listen and observe, flexibility in thinking, ability to give constructive feedback, and so on. Therefore, those who broker resources for school improvement teams will need to reconsider their criteria for effective consultants. Teachers at other schools, union staff, IDOE program and subject matter personnel, service center employees, and local university faculty may meet these criteria more readily than individuals on the national or regional workshop circuit. These individuals may not only have the required service orientation and skills, but they also may be available at less cost, sometimes (as with IDOE personnel) none at all.

QUALIFICATIONS OF EFFECTIVE OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS INCLUDE ACQUAINTANCE WITH RESEARCH, AVAILABILITY, ABILITY TO LISTEN AND OBSERVE, FLEXIBILITY IN THINKING, AND ABILITY TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK.

Finally, using computer technology or giving members of improvement teams access to it may be a particularly appropriate way to serve some of the teams' needs for outside assistance. For example, recent research is now easily accessible through ERIC and other databases. IDEAnet maintains bulletin boards that may help teachers (a) become aware of teacher networks that focus on the school's priorities, (b) locate other schools with appropriate programs, or (c) find locally available consultants who have proven helpful to other schools.

COORDINATION

School districts should keep schools apprised of the school improvement activities and resources at other schools in the district and assist those schools to take advantage of common resources when possible.

If individual teachers have had few opportunities to pay attention to and work collaboratively with their colleagues at the same school, they have had even fewer chances to learn about and benefit from the work of their counterparts at other schools in the district. Yet the school improvement efforts of sister schools sometimes have a constructive application at their own schools. Moreover, similar school improvement efforts at other schools in the district may make possible increased efficiencies in the use of the school reservoirs.

Q & A

Q: *How much work does this coordination involve?*

Not a lot. Much of this awareness of other schools' activities will occur naturally as a result of teams' reporting their progress to the local school board. These reports in small and medium size school districts could be accomplished at a single meeting of the board. Because these reports take place only once a year and because a single session for all reports may not be feasible in larger districts, personnel responsible for brokering resources can provide more current information and coordination when the teams' activities would seem to benefit from cross-fertilization.

• Conclusion •

The principles of effective professional development open up possibilities and present challenges for all involved in Indiana's schools. The challenges are obvious. Parents, teachers, principals, central administrators, school board members, and union officials need to reassess the priority they attach to professional development and, even more basic, how they understand it. All need the conviction to act consistently with these ideas:

- **Teachers and principals** need to question their current practices, to seek help inside and outside the school, to risk making changes, and to be consciously self-critical of the changes they make.

- **Parents, school board members, central administrators, and union officials** need to foster reasonable trust toward and among school personnel, to free resources for professional development determined at the school level, and to support professional learning in policy and practice.

The potential payoff, however, makes these challenges worth undertaking. Schools can build their own capacity to stimulate and improve student learning. They can develop the ability to adapt continuously to changing student potential, social circumstances, and public expectations. And they can become accountable to the public in a truly meaningful way, based on criteria that are accepted as important and measures of performance that genuinely reflect those criteria. In short, they can become institutions that are and are known to be centers of continuous learning for students and teachers alike.

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